

Aspiring manager's pilot

Final report

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Skills for Care is the employer-led strategic body for workforce development in social care for adults in England. It is part of the sector skills council, Skills for Care and Development.

This work was researched and compiled by Jude Teicke, Jenny Swift and Dora Blake of Skills for Care.

Executive Summary

The Aspiring manager's pilot and evaluation methodology

The Aspiring manager's pilot ran from April 2017 until September 2018. The overall aim of the pilot was to address the lack of a defined route into becoming a registered manager, and the skills gap which exists between a care coordinator and the role and therefore improve the recruitment, retention and quality of registered managers.

The pilot contained a number of different elements including a series of face to face meetings for the six cohorts, a 'Lead to succeed' leadership and management programme delivered by an endorsed provider; working through the Manager Induction Standards; participation in a Registered Manager Network meeting; an Experience Tour of a peer's service; and completion of a Learning Log. 58 participants started the programme and 45 completed it.

The evaluation sought to answer questions about how satisfied participants were with the different pilot elements; the extent to which they had achieved specific skills and competencies; the most effective elements of the programme and its additionality.

Primary data was gathered through skills and competency self-assessments; online surveys; and focus groups. Secondary data was also analysed i.e. the content of participants' Learning Logs.

Outcomes

There was strong evidence of progress in all aspects of leadership and management in the qualitative data, and significant (although varying degrees of) progress in the self-assessment survey data.

Results from the self-assessments indicate that the programme had the most effect on the skills which had the lowest scores at baseline. The areas where participants' self-assessed scores increased the most were:

- having good business skills
- understanding of what is involved in managing resources
- confidence in managing resources in my organisation
- confidence in being able to support and develop a team.

Themes which were particularly strong in the qualitative data were:

- **Improvements in supporting and managing a team** which included feeling much more confident in managing teams; recognising abilities; developing

team skills; praising staff; improved understanding and application of good practice in recruitment, induction and supervision. Participants had also gained in confidence in relation to addressing performance issues in staff.

- **Communication** which included communicating with other professionals (including the importance of sharing information); listening skills and showing empathy; speaking with authority; and questioning decisions.
- **Personal transformation.** Many participants saw themselves differently after being on the programme and felt they were more professional and confident, with increased self-worth, and less self-doubt. Participants reported an increased belief in their own abilities and knowledge.

There was evidence that **most participants felt more ready to enter the role of registered manager** by the end of the programme. There was strong evidence of progression towards management with increased delegation and responsibilities, independent working, expanded roles, acting up within a manager role, and promotions.

Despite increased readiness, **not every participant intended to move into the role in the immediate term**, possibly because of an increased awareness of the pressures or a desire to focus more on personal and professional development. The programme appeared to have increased focus on this and a majority were intending to begin their Level 5 or had already started it.

Additionality

Participants progressed significantly during the final six months of the programme. Furthermore, a second cohort of the pilot was run over a reduced time period (six months rather than twelve). Participants on the six-month programme didn't achieve the magnitude of progress as those on the 12-month programme which suggests the final six months of support are important. However, it's not clear whether this progress would have happened anyway.

'Lead to succeed' and the peer support were the key added value components of the programme. There's strong evidence that, as a result of their time on the pilot, participants were more prepared for the role, and would have the leadership and management skills necessary to do the job well.

Process and Implementation findings

Before starting the programme, participants identified the following areas as ones in which they most needed support and were the least confident.

- Leadership skills.
- Supporting team members.

- Business skills.
- Managing resources.
- Identifying relevant pieces of legislation and policy.

Most were also highly motivated to participate and to progress in their career. Participants found the process of enrolment straightforward, but there was some confusion about certain elements (e.g. working through the Manager Induction Standards, and whether the programme led to an accredited qualification).

While most participants coped with the demands of the programme, some struggled. While the majority of participants received valuable support from their manager and were happy with it, some did not receive enough support, or the right kind of support. Where managerial support was strong, this was felt to have been extremely valuable in helping participants develop. Participants who did not receive as much support found the process more challenging but some still made excellent progress.

On the whole, a high level of satisfaction was expressed with the amount of support that Skills for Care had provided. Participants expressed particular satisfaction, and felt that these elements of the programme had been the most effective at leading to positive change:

- Lead to succeed programme
- Peer support
- Registered Manager Network meetings.

In conclusion there's strong evidence that the pilot achieved its aims and objectives with participants having grown in leadership skills in particular (speaking with authority, finding their voices, and addressing challenging situations). While not all were ready to enter the role of registered manager, they were all much better prepared for the transition and were keen to continue to develop themselves personally and professionally.

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