

Summary

The registered managers' networks aim to support registered managers to improve the quality of their services through improved leadership practice.

The main activities of networks are informal and formal peer support, delivery of training and inviting guest speakers to talk about particular topics. Popular themes for networks to cover are improving knowledge, learning and development, workforce development, improving direct work with service users, as well as improving connections and working relationships with other organisations.

An evaluation of the networks was carried out between February and June 2016. An online survey was sent to the participants of 48 networks that had been running for about 12 months or longer to determine the extent to which participation had resulted in positive outcomes (feeling more valued and supported, better equipped to support staff and respond to significant changes, and more likely to remain in their position). The survey received 143 responses.

The greatest benefit survey respondents reported from participation in the networks was access to up to date information. This had helped them to improve their knowledge of legislation, good practice, regulations and standards, which in turn had led to increases in confidence in particular topics and application of this knowledge to their practice. Registered managers also cascaded knowledge to their staff within their own organisations and felt more motivated to pursue opportunities for self-directed learning.

Qualitative comments suggest that networking opportunities helped participants improve their links with, and knowledge of, other organisations, share information and knowledge, and share and solve problems. Feedback from respondents also indicates that meeting with peers helped participants feel less isolated in their role.

The aspects of network participation, which members were less likely to believe to be extremely or very helpful, were 'feeling more supported in their role' (60%) or 'feeling more confident in their role' (57%). Half of survey respondents felt that the networks had been extremely or very useful in helping them to better support staff, which suggests more could be done to achieve these network objectives.

Over half of respondents (52%) indicated that their experience had made them more likely to continue as a registered manager, 40% believed that it had made no difference

and 8% were unsure. No respondents believed that the experience had made them less likely to continue in their role.

Suggestions for improvements to the networks were:

- more specialist sessions
- more guest speakers
- an increased and more varied membership
- changes to the location, format and frequency of meetings
- additional meetings for those in similar roles.

A more detailed evaluation of the 2016/17 programme will be carried out looking at additional indicators and examining a greater number of networks.