



Sussex Health and Care

Leadership Development to deliver Sustained Change

Sussex Health and Care is an Integrated Care System (ICS) which serves a population of more than 1.7 million people and works collaboratively with NHS, Local Authorities, voluntary and community organisations across Sussex.

The ICS has an important role in integrating local services and agencies to ensure the best possible patient experiences. The focus is on reducing the gaps in healthy life expectancies between communities and supporting the population to stay healthy and have access to the most appropriate support, care and treatment needed.

Background

Sussex Health and Care engaged Roffey Park as their preferred supplier in 2020. Using our sector insights, we collaborated closely to develop and deliver a series of leadership programmes to build leadership skills, behaviours and resilience, with a particular focus on delivering change that was sustainable far beyond the life of the programme.

An additional challenge emerged during the first iteration of the programme. The NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard report highlighted that employees of certain ethnicities are less likely to attend non-mandatory training or engage in Continuous Professional Development. To help address this we worked closely with the Sussex team to explore how we could help develop a positive action programme that would engage and be impactful to colleagues with ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Developing the Programmes

Working collaboratively with the Sussex Partnership, we designed a series of leadership programmes to equip participants with the skills and tools to make the most of their existing dedication, skills, and professionalism.

The first of these programmes was *'Developing Excellence Together'* which comprised six modules: Good Leadership; Compassionate Leadership; Communications and influences; Managing Difficult Conversations; Leading Change. Simultaneously, participants also attended Personal Wellbeing Workshops to help develop their resilience in challenging situations.

Critically, this programme was open to leaders across all levels of NHS Partnerships in Sussex meaning that doctors, consultants, nurses, and administrative managers are all among the groups who have successfully engaged in the programme.

In March 2022, building on the skills learned in this programme, *'Enhancing Leadership Excellence'* was born. This continues to enhance and develop the learning from the initial programme.

Alongside this, we have collaboratively developed *'Reaching New Heights'*, a programme focusing exclusively on ethnically diverse participants. The development of this programme has relied on transparent communications and trusting relationships with both the ICS and participants alike.

Although ethnically diverse employees participated in *'Developing Excellence Together'*, it was felt that a programme designed exclusively for these employees would be beneficial. This decision was informed by communication with the Project Manager for Race Equality Programme and the concerns highlighted in the NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard report.

This version of the programme provides an increased focus on networking and encouraging delegates to form supportive relationships. It also encourages participants to consider preparing for promotion by developing their leadership skills through other means such as additional reading available through Roffey Park's learning platform and our MindTools suite of online learning resources.

Our approach

The Roffey Park approach is to work 'up close and personal' with all our clients to really understand their needs, context and desired outcomes. We achieve this by carrying out an Insights Gathering phase, in this case, a combination of robust conversations and research. A critical part of this was managing the needs of multiple stakeholders to ensure that we developed a rich and relevant programme of learning, linked to measurable outcomes and that could be embedded back in the workplace.

We also recognised the need for an expert team – with lived experience of the context – who could leverage their insights and integrate them into the programme design, keeping the threads of the agreed outcomes tied from regional down to local level.

Flexibility and agility on Roffey Park's end were essential to the success of the programmes, as they enabled us to develop and change the programmes as they progressed, integrating learner or client feedback. Our team understand that issues highlighted are often not the only ones at play, so we encourage a cycle of feedback and improvement throughout. This results in an iterative cycle of learning and re-design so that what we deliver continues to meet evolving needs and the desired outcomes.

Warm and cooperative relationships have played a critical role in the success of the programmes. Our dedicated Client Relationship Manager has played a pivotal role as the independent voice for the client, helping stakeholders recognise their needs and uniting these various demands so that Roffey Park can continue to deliver maximum impact.

Impacts and outcomes

Part of the great success of the original programme has been due to its **agile nature**. It was initially developed to be delivered via MS Teams, and the ongoing flexibility that offered proved **extremely practical for NHS participants** and ensured that we could incorporate their evolving needs.

We asked the participants of all three programmes, '*Developing Excellence Together*', '*Reaching new Heights*' and '*Enhancing Leadership Excellence*', **if they would recommend the programmes to their colleagues**. The results we received back were **staggering; 99.8% of participants answered that they would**. All cohorts reported a felt improvement in team relationships and trust, believing that they were **better equipped to overcome challenges** as a team following the programme.

Significantly, **76% of '*Reaching New Heights*' participants found that their ability to communicate clearly improved**, and over **80% reported that the programme helped them to understand what compassionate leadership is and how to implement it**.



I feel more confident from what I have learned from the course. Career progression doesn't feel as daunting as previously... I feel I can use what I learned from this course to grow in more than one aspect of my job role.