

Customer Spotlight



Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Public Health Team

Developing cross-stream collaboration in Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's Public Health Team

With growth comes growing pains, but also opportunities. Explore how Northumbria Healthcare's Public Health team developed cross-stream collaboration and a shared identity through the power of learning, reflection and behavioural insights.

Background

The NHS plays a key role in preventing ill health, improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities for patients, staff and our local communities. The Public Health team support this across a range of areas by providing specialist support and input to build public health capability and capacity across the organisation to ensure services are accessible, good quality and tailored to people's needs.

The Public Health team is a relatively new service in the Trust, launching with a small team and a public health strategy in 2018. Since then, further roles have been developed to support the public health programme and training functions including two public health operational management roles to develop and manage the team and set up appropriate governance and accountability structures.

This presented an important opportunity for them to review the management and leadership required for a much bigger multi-disciplinary team. It provided a chance to examine what was required to better connect the different public health portfolios, with the aim to cultivate a shared understanding of goals, objectives and the part everyone played.

Additionally, while the team had a clear a strategy behind the workstreams, there was a recognition that robust assurance processes needed to be developed to capture progress and achieve the shared purpose and understanding of other members' roles or workstreams. In short, there was a need to improve connections and cross-stream collaboration between team members and respond to the growing pains with a clear plan that everyone could own.



The Public Health Team needed to take a step back, consider the overarching structure for their team and determine what Northumbria Healthcare needs with regards to Public Health and the strategic goals of the organisation.

A commitment was made to invest in team time to provide opportunities to bring the team together to work collaboratively across workstreams and to develop a Public Health action plan to support the Trust Strategy. This also helped build upon existing positive relationships and establish a shared ownership within the team.

Solution

The public health team enlisted the support of the Organisational Development (OD) team to facilitate this process. This was supported by establishing some clear goals for the sessions:

- Identify opportunities for interdependent working
- Break down silos
- Celebrate success
- Facilitate the improvement of cross-stream collaboration
- To foster a sense of team identity and accountability moving forward


Over a period of six months, two day sessions were facilitated where the Public Health Team underwent team building, Insights Discovery workshops and action planning which enabled them to agree a clear path for how they wanted to operate in the future.

With Insights Discovery as the foundation, this tailored solution provided each team member with the opportunity to complete an Insights evaluator and receive feedback. This helped individuals in the team to understand their own preferences and develop their awareness for how these were showing up for others. Importantly, it also provided insights into the behaviour of others to help colleagues adapt and accommodate differences within the team. The assessment feedback was a key ingredient to support the team to build relationships, achieve shared ownership, and determine a clear road map moving forward.

With awareness as the base, the OD Team were able to introduce Insights solutions as an integrated approach. This addressed the needs of the Public Health team, agreed actions to develop governance processes, and the ability to determine the team's strategy. Additionally, the sessions didn't just enable them to consider the shared objectives of the business unit but also enabled the opportunity for the team to have dedicated time to get to know one another.

The simplistic nature of the language of colour that is used across the Insights Discovery learning and models enabled both team members and managers alike to develop trust and rapport, by understanding and appreciating individual's behavioural preferences, styles of working and how they can effectively collaborate.

Moreover, gaining insight into personal preferences, recognising key strengths, acknowledging potential weaknesses, and valuing each team member's role facilitated a collective identity. This awareness of how individual inputs align with the broader context laid the foundation for embracing shared ownership.



“ This was a new way of working for the team, from working in silos to working towards a shared purpose and thinking about all workstreams as cogs within the public health wheel. ”

Lisa Davies, PH OSM

The 'away day' structure:

Day 1

- Team building activity
- Insights workshops
- Our successes and reflections- focus on Public Health future objectives, workforce planning and what resources may be needed to achieve success.

Day 2

- Team building activity
- Play my part- to discuss what has been their input into current successes and look at how they align with the current strategy
- Action planning- formulate specific actions points to align to the strategy
- Our road map:
Where are we now?
Where do we want to be?
How will we get there?

The Impact

The learning journey enabled the team to agree and build foundations for change and development moving forward.

Team members were encouraged to share their Insights Discovery profiles with colleagues and line managers to nurture the foundations of the session and gain better understanding of preferences, strengths and weaknesses to support ongoing collaborative working.

As well as championing Insights Discovery in communication and collaboration, the team also moved their monthly team meeting to face-to-face to further foster and support relationship building in the team. Team-manager meetings were also established to provide peer support and consistency within the team.

The impacts of the sessions have resulted in Insights Discovery forming an intrinsic part of team communications. With the OD team having delivered further sessions and an active encouragement to share Insights Discovery profiles and preferences with new and existing team members.

Interested in breaking down team silos or creating your own collaborative team environment? Get in touch to learn more.

“ The away days and the preparation work have allowed us to develop firm foundations for the team and set out our shared objectives. ”

NHS Public Health Team Member