

Unique leadership development and employee well-being programme helping Mersey Care to prepare for Foundation Trust equivalent Status

- Underpinning structural change with employee well-being and engagement -

Manchester: 3 August, 2009: , – A unique and integrated leadership development and employee well-being programme from UK business psychologists, Robertson Cooper, has been implemented by Mersey Care NHS Trust to help it prepare for Foundation Trust equivalent (FTe) status.

Mersey Care NHS Trust provides specialist mental health and learning disability services for the people of Liverpool, Sefton, and Knowsley. Achieving FTe status will enable the organisation to be more responsive, more effective and more accountable to its local population. As part of this process, Mersey Care is implementing an organisational change programme that involves modernisation and restructuring to increase service capacity and efficiency.

At the heart of the change process is the establishment of new Clinical Business Units and teams of clinical and managerial staff have been selected from within the organisation to run them. Senior staff took part in development centres that helped them to decide which new roles they wanted to apply for. In addition to these changes, the Trust is making a concerted effort to improve the leadership skills of its clinical and managerial staff.

A priority for Mersey Care was to ensure that its staff felt involved and supported throughout the new structure. The Board realised that if employees felt good about coming to work and engaged by their roles they would respond more

positively to the changes that were planned. In turn, this would be key to implementing a sustainable change.

Kim Crowe, the Trust's Director of Service Development and Delivery stated, "Like many NHS Trusts, we are undergoing major changes that are placing new demands on our staff. We appointed Robertson Cooper because they offered a unique way of incorporating well-being and management development. This programme is enabling us to assess the impact of the restructure on our managers whilst we are developing their leadership skills. At the same time, the process is helping them to clarify their career goals and make sound decisions about the roles that they aspire to play in the Trust."

The Programme

Robertson Cooper used ASSET, its market-leading change and well-being measurement tool to survey all staff to assess the impact of the changes taking place. Using the results, individual employee action plans were designed to improve well-being and engagement, and inform managers about how to address staff priorities and become more effective leaders.

A programme of Development Centres (DC's) for 51 leaders was designed and implemented, based on the NHS Leadership Qualities Framework (LQF). The design reduced the established 16 leadership 'Qualities' (competencies) from the LQF into four, making it less complex for managers to access and easier to apply for wider organisation development.

Gordon Tinline, Director of Robertson Cooper states, "Mersey Care has taken an advanced approach to change management. Placing employee engagement at the centre of its programme will deliver sustainable change because it will be strongly underpinned by psychological well-being among its workforce. Typically, change only lasts as long as the project that implements it and often, such programmes are poorly communicated to employees. Cultural change needs to take hold and this is only possible when employees are fully engaged, driven by strong leadership and feel a real sense of purpose."

Tinline continues: "Because Mersey Care is integrating well-being and engagement into its leadership development programme, we are confident that

sustainable change will be achieved here. They have started to build a workforce which has the right people, leadership and engagement levels to deliver excellent health services to patients in Merseyside.”

Results so far

83% of the senior managers and clinicians who completed the evaluation agreed that the content of the DCs met their expectations.

The results from the organisation-wide *ASSET* survey are now being used to build action plans with leaders as they settle into new roles in the restructured CBUs over the next 12 months. This, together with the reports the managers received is providing a firm foundation for building strong staff engagement in the restructured organisation.

Ends

About Mersey Care NHS Trust

Mersey Care provides specialist mental health and learning disability services for the people of Liverpool, Sefton and Kirkby. It has a wider role too, offering medium secure services for Merseyside and Cheshire, and high secure services covering England and Wales.

The Trust employs 5400 staff and operates from 61 sites.

The Trust campaigns for better understanding, resources and the need to challenge the stigma attached to mental distress

About Robertson Cooper Ltd

Robertson Cooper is a specialist in employee engagement and well-being in the workplace. As a leading authority on the business case for well-being in the UK, it provides products and expert advice that deliver tangible business benefits. The company was founded in 1999 by Professors Ivan Robertson and Cary Cooper with offices in Manchester and London. Robertson Cooper serves a wide range of public sector and blue-chip clients including, NHS Trusts, Criminal Justice, Central Government and Financial Services.

Robertson Cooper is also the founder of the Business Well-being Network. Set up in 2008, it is a community of more than 90 organisations (over half of which are from the public sector) that links HR, OD and Occupational Health & Safety professionals together to share experience and keep up with the latest developments in the fields of well-being and engagement.

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