

Care Focus

We developed our own courses about diabetes, then trained and qualified staff

We worked with a diabetes expert to create four new workbooks for two courses leading to qualifications in diabetes care. 53 people achieved an Award or Certificate - a 100 per cent success rate.

Background

Care Focus supports workforce development for the social care sector in Somerset. This project focused on providing training in diabetes for as wide a range as possible of people involved in or working closely with the health and social care sector. Diabetes is a massive issue across the country and the number of people expected to become diabetic is likely to increase dramatically with profound cost implications for the NHS and with substantial effects on the health and social care system generally.

“...dignity and training for dementia care are key in how we work as a team”

Care staff participant

Before the project Care Focus found that there was very little diabetes training available for such a broad group and what was on offer was considered to be inadequate. Consequently, Care Focus decided that it would be useful to devise a course that would provide a thorough grounding in diabetes awareness at one level and could be taken further to provide an understanding of how to manage diabetes at another level. The course would be a stepping stone towards the achievement of one of the new QCF qualifications in diabetes at either Level 2 or 3.

In addition, Care Focus decided they would facilitate further support for participants once the training was completed, in the form of learning exchange networks. These would be physical groups to allow people to come back together and reflect on the learning, exchange best practice and possibly do further training on diabetes.

What we wanted to achieve

The principal aim was to devise two courses about diabetes and to create accompanying workbooks with the result that trainees could attain a good level of knowledge about diabetes. One course would lead to a Level 2 qualification and the other to a Level 3 qualification.

The purpose was to promote the courses widely to all of Care Focus's contacts which included residential homes, nursing homes, domiciliary care companies, learning disability services, mental

health organisations, integrated support services, sensory loss services, housing operators, the local authority and others for whom knowledge about diabetes would be beneficial in the workplace – for example chefs and podiatrists.

There would be places for about 50 participants and all those that undertook the training would become diabetes leads in their own organisations, able to be a source of information, advice and guidance to others in their team. The aim was also to provide learning exchange networks so that participants could continue to have an element of support after the training finished and possibly do further training in diabetes.

By increasing the level of knowledge about the issue of diabetes across the county, the aim was to be able to improve the quality of care for people with the condition.

What we did

Care Focus worked with the county's diabetes expert to create four workbooks which were to be the backbone of the training courses. Jon Guy, project lead at Care Focus comments "We were surprised at how much hard work the creation of these workbooks required and also surprised at how much information we found on the subject that was inaccurate or at best out of date. The process of putting the workbooks together was a sure indication of the need for properly updated training in this subject."

The team created two courses, one lasting just one day and the other involving four days with private study between each session. The first course linked to the Level 2 QCF Award in Awareness of Diabetes; the second to the Level 3 Certificate in Working with Individuals with Diabetes. Care Focus sent out information about the courses to about 450 company contacts, also

disseminating information at events, via email and on the company's website.

The response came as a surprise. Many different organisations in Somerset and some from outside the county made enquiries with the result that 270 potential delegates were put forward for the 50 available places. Eventually, 26 Somerset-based care organisations were each allocated approximately two places on the courses. After brief initial screening 42 people took up the one-day course divided into two groups of 21 each and 11 were allocated to the four-day course. All participants were assessed by a third party to ascertain that they reached the required standard to pass the course.

To evaluate the training, all participants filled in feedback forms and there was also a short debrief session with the trainers; in combination these helped to identify if any modifications were required for subsequent courses.

In order to overcome the standard problem of the 'forgetting curve' which suggests that about 90 per cent of learning is lost within a few days of receiving training, individuals were required to do homework studies between training sessions.

What we achieved

The project provided training for 53 participants representing a wide range of care-related organisations. This was three more than the target. Jon Guy said, "If I'd foreseen just how popular the training would be I think I would have asked for more funds at the outset but there was no way of knowing what the response would be."

All 53 participants completed their training and 42 gained qualifications at Level 2 while 11 gained them at Level 3, therefore achieving a 100% success rate.

“ The project could easily be replicated and this could happen not only in Somerset but on a much larger scale. ”

John Guy, Project Lead

The feedback from the participants on the courses was extremely positive and the most rewarding aspect was that the training had a beneficial effect on individual services and people who need care and support. Practice and confidence have improved as a result of the project as is testified by the responses of the participants:

- “The training I have received has been very beneficial to my practice in my workplace as we have a few people with Type 2 diabetes. The trainers have made it an enjoyable event, they have brought our group together and we have been able to share a lot of our own scenarios and have been well supported.”
- “I gained a wider understanding of diabetes from your course. My understanding of the subject before the course was very poor...the course enabled me to advise one of our service user’s carers on the correct things that need to be placed in a survival meds bag...the existing system of work was not fit for purpose and risk assessments have changed to reflect this.”
- “In my current role as a training manager it is my responsibility to ensure that staff who are working with clients with diabetes have an awareness of the condition and we regularly deliver an in-house course, with specialist support when required. This course has increased my knowledge level significantly and consequently I feel much more confident in the delivery of our awareness course and can now update the file accordingly.”

The four workbooks that were commissioned as part of the programme remain a tangible asset and are available for future training. These resources are now available from Skills for Care.

Specialist learning exchange networks are being co-ordinated to support those who attended the course. These will provide a forum for the exchange of good practice following training and a chance for participants to update each other on the experience of their own services since training.

What we learnt

The skills learned by the participants who took part in this training were very quickly transferred into the workplace. According to Jon Guy the project has demonstrated how it is possible to provide a format for training that can readily be transferred to new areas, possibly outside the health and social care sector. For example it could be used to deliver diabetes awareness training in schools and among the friends and family of people with diabetes, using the same approach.

Many involved in the training highlighted that there was a general lack of understanding and prevalence of inaccurate or misleading information about diabetes. There were even a few participants who were themselves diabetic and who found the training extremely informative about their condition.

“The popularity of the course was perhaps the biggest surprise,” says Jon Guy. “The project could easily be replicated, particularly given the foundation of the four workbooks and this could happen not only in Somerset but on a much larger scale. During our publicity and marketing of this training, we received enquiries from outside Somerset and from groups of people who we hadn’t anticipated wanting to take part.”

For more information please contact

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Skills for Care Recommends

Skills for Care has developed resources and qualifications to help those providing care relating to diabetes. These include;

Guide to qualifications in adult social care



We have developed Level 2 and Level 3 Certificates for Diabetes Care. Delivered by independent training companies, these qualifications can help build confidence and competence.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/qualifications

Funding

For adult social care employers in England, our funding can help towards the cost of diabetes qualifications.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/funding

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