

The Stroke Association

QCF Level 3 Stroke Management Training

The Stroke Association, a national charity and leading provider of stroke-specific training, developed and delivered a Level 3 QCF stroke care management qualification. The training was fully funded and offered to care home staff. A key aim of the project was to deliver the course without the use of IT.

Background

The Stroke Association is the largest national charity working with stroke sufferers. They employ over 600 staff and have over 4000 volunteers based across the UK. They are also the leading provider of stroke-specific training and education for the health and social care sectors, as well as providing training to their volunteers and other internal staff members.

Recently, they have noticed a dramatic reduction in local authority funding for stroke-specific training, with priority now being given to mandatory training courses. This means that, in general, care home staff often only have access to the health and social care diplomas and not to stroke-specific qualifications. From their experience in working with care home staff, they are also very aware that staff are 'seldom seen or heard', and are often unaware of the stroke fundamentals – they do not know that it's preventable, how to act when it

happens or how to care for the long-term complex effects of stroke, highlighting the need for spoke-specific training.

What we wanted to achieve

The Stroke Association wanted to develop and deliver a stroke-specific training course for the Level 3 Certificate in Stroke Care Management. They decided to offer the Level 3 qualification because they were already offering the Level 2 qualification and some of the Level 2 modules can be used towards the Level 3.

An overall aim of the project was to provide stroke-specific qualifications, and to ensure care homes have access to this provision. In addition, they wanted to drive up care standards, improve participants' knowledge and skills around stroke care and prevention, and raise awareness of the condition.

They wanted to provide a training course that did not use any IT after hearing from care staff that they found IT difficult to use. Instead, they developed workbooks and provided a combination of face-to-face and distance learning.

“ I was really pleased with the impact the course had on stroke sufferers and the improvement in their care...it raised the awareness of stroke considerably ”

Helen Wilcox, Project Lead

What we did

Activities undertaken with the funding included:

- The development of learning materials including: a learning handbook; a learning manual for each unit; a learner workbook; PowerPoint slides; activities and lesson plans;
- Marketing and recruitment for the course;
- Delivery of the training. Training consisted of seven course units delivered over 20 weeks, with one training day a week. They later shortened the course and incorporated more independent study; and
- They engaged Local Authority Workforce Development teams in the West Midlands and the North West who helped them to find venues.

What we achieved

The training was open to all social care staff whose employers were registered on the National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC), as well as some care home nurses. All students achieved the qualification and were proud to have passed such a large qualification - participants asked if they could have a graduation ceremony, and some hired graduation gowns. Students reported increased confidence and knowledge about stroke, as well as feeling that they could communicate better with Stroke patients and better understand what patients were trying to tell them. Participants also noted increased job satisfaction, with two attendees moving from working in dementia care to stroke care. More generally students shared the learning from the course more widely both within their organisations, and also more widely (for example, with friends and family). This contributed to wider culture change. Managers also noted some improvement in staff retention.

Results from their pre- and post-training questionnaires showed that the course considerably raised participants' awareness of stroke – the questionnaires suggested a 44% increase in the number of stroke sufferers in care homes. Rather than reflecting an actual increase, it showed just how much more aware staff had become of stroke sufferers within their organisations.

Stroke patients have also benefitted from the training course. Often stroke patients would have their care withdrawn after a certain period under an assumption that their symptoms could improve no further – carers now know that this is not the case and that patients' symptoms can still improve over this period. After the course, some participants said they'd called 999 or referred patients immediately to healthcare services.

What we learnt

The shortened course, including more independent study, worked particularly well because learners were able to maintain their momentum, working to much shorter deadlines and staying more focussed. The Stroke Association also offered flexible support over this shorter period.

One problem they encountered was the difficulty in recruiting course participants - students were reluctant to sign up for training over such a long period of time, and for their employers to cover the cost of them not working in their day-to-day role during the training sessions. In particular they had problems with people signing up to the course but never attending. In future they would like to charge an up-front fee to participants to prevent this from happening. They also noted that it is particularly difficult to deliver the level 3 QCF qualification because it requires stroke specialists and assessors to go into the student workplace.

“It is inspiring to see people blossoming because the programme has provided a basis for each individual to do more good work, and do it more efficiently and happily.”

Helen Wilcox, Project Lead

For more information please contact

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Skills for Care Recommends

This innovative project was a relatively new area for Skills for Care to support. Whilst we have not developed any directly related resources, you may be interested in the following;

Guide to qualifications and standards in adult social care

This priced publication is aimed at supervisors and managers helping to support the induction process for a new colleague.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/qualifications

Funding

For adult social care employers in England, our funding can help towards the cost of learning and development for learning disabilities.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/funding

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