

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Trust slashes disciplinary cases by 75 per cent

BY BEN WILLMOTT

A Leeds NHS trust has slashed the number of disciplinary cases it faces by 75 per cent after introducing a new framework which encourages staff to take responsibility for their actions.

The HR director at Leeds Mental Health Teaching NHS Trust, Jane Burtoft, decided 18 months ago that the trust needed to transform the way it dealt with disciplinary issues because of the high number of cases and to combat the issue of blame culture.

"At any one time there were about 30 ongoing disciplinary

cases and there was a very poor relationship with the staff side [union representatives]," she said.

"People were disciplined, but there was no follow-through. Something was needed to reduce the number of cases, change the culture and people's attitudes."

In response, Burtoft developed a Personal Responsibility Framework in conjunction with the unions, to encourage staff to take the initiative in reporting potential disciplinary incidents they were involved in.

The framework asked staff to take 50 per cent responsibility for everything happening

around them, and was designed to promote active rather than passive behaviour.

Burtoft produced better guidance for line managers and trained them to help play a part in changing the work culture.

The trust also moved the resolution of disciplinary issues up the agenda. Managers were told to make disciplinary issues their top priority to ensure cases were settled quicker.

The trust now holds a case conference prior to any disciplinary hearing, comprising the line manager, staff representative and a member of the HR team to

discuss how to manage the process so it is completed within six to eight weeks.

"It is more important that disciplinary cases are dealt with as swiftly as possible because they affect everybody and create morale and productivity problems," said Burtoft.

To ensure all staff were aware of the framework, everyone was sent a leaflet summarising the guidance, regular briefings are held across the trust and the new guidelines form a key part of the organisation's induction and performance review process.

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Burtoft: changed people's attitudes