

Project SEARCH

St George's Hospital, Tooting, London

Review commissioned by Cricket Green School 26 October 2015

The purpose of this review is to identify the key strengths and areas for development for the Project SEARCH initiative based at St George's Hospital, Tooting. The evidence used for this review is taken from a broad range of sources available during w/c 19 October 2015, including: interviews with trainees, parents, tutors, job coaches, mentors, and managers. In addition, observations of lessons, shadowing trainees at work in the hospital, reviews of course files and scrutiny of documentation.

Key Strengths

Trainees make very good progress from their individual starting points

Trainees develop highly effective employability skills and improve their self confidence

Trainees enjoy working and learning

A large majority of trainees successfully progress in to employment after leaving the Project

Project staff use their good skills very effectively to ensure all trainees are highly motivated

Project staff and managers have high aspirations for all trainees

Project staff work effectively to ensure that trainees' behaviour is appropriate in all settings in the hospital

Highly effective mentoring arrangements ensure all trainees make very good progress

The hospital workforce provides a welcoming, inclusive and highly supportive environment for learning

The Hospital Education Team provides very effective support for Project SEARCH and this ensures that the trainees are increasingly successful in their work-placements.

Outcomes for trainees

- All of the current trainees have settled very well at the hospital and are making good progress given their individual starting points. They acquire knowledge quickly and develop a thorough understanding of a wide range of different aspects of their job roles. Their attendance and punctuality are consistently good and they show good levels of commitment, positive attitudes to work and life and become increasingly more responsible as they gain experience.
- Trainees work hard because they enjoy their work and value being part of a team with shared objectives. The work they do is of a good standard and all trainees demonstrate

that they have a good understanding of the importance of effective patient care, such as greeting and reassuring patients as they arrive in the reception area and helping them to find their way to the correct department.

- All trainees gain very useful accredited qualifications in subjects such as manual handling and health and safety. A few learners also gain accredited qualifications in food safety and nutrition. St George's Hospital offers a rich source of work experience in various departments. This provides trainees with hands-on experience in many roles including portering, administration, delivering post, catering and reception duties.
- Trainees increase their self-confidence significantly during their time on Project SEARCH. This results in trainees demonstrating increasingly effective social skills in their interactions with staff and patients. They understand how to solve problems and use their initiative to discover new ways of completing tasks. For example, one learner has discovered that he can reassure patients by giving them a confident smile as he moves them around the hospital safely using either a bed or wheelchair.
- Trainees develop a very good range of transferable skills, which significantly improve their chances of finding suitable and sustainable employment, such as listening carefully to instructions, dealing confidently and effectively with the public, completing tasks and seeking feedback on how to improve. A learner who usually is shy has developed good skills in seeking advice and clarity about her tasks. She told me 'it is okay to ask for help'.
- In the last three years a good proportion (66%) of the trainees who have attended the Project have gained employment. For example, they now have jobs in restaurants, a local leisure centre, in a local school and within the hospital itself. A few trainees find places on further education courses to extend their skills and qualifications even further.

Teaching, learning and assessment

- Everyone involved in Project SEARCH wants the very best for all of the trainees. The Project staff use their good skills and good levels of relevant experience very effectively to ensure all trainees remain highly motivated and make good progress towards improving their educational, personal and vocational skills. They ensure that all aspects of teaching, coaching, mentoring and assessment comply closely with the prescribed Project Search curriculum and delivery model.
- St George's Hospital provides highly effective workplace mentors who support trainees very well. This ensures that trainees remain focused, stimulated and continue to build on their good development. However, several of the mentors interviewed explained that they would welcome and benefit from receiving more information, training and support for their roles. For example, more detailed initial assessment information to help them fully understand the needs of each trainee, an outline of their general learning targets, their interests and the overall level progress they are making.
- The Project tutor and the specialist job-coach have a very good understanding of each trainee's needs and interests and they use this very effectively to ensure all trainees make progress. However, arrangements for initial assessment and setting of individual learning plans are not fully developed. As a result of this trainees do not receive

individual targets and staff do not systematically monitor the progress of individual trainees.

- Lessons are good because they are well planned and delivered at a pace that is matched very well to the trainees' individual needs. The tutor uses a variety of very effective methods successfully to ensure trainees remain engaged. For example, in a good lesson on understanding important words used by employers, trainees practiced using them appropriately through role-play; such as speaking to each other about what 'receiving a 'salary' and good 'patient care' actually looks like.
- Project staff encourage trainees successfully to continually improve their work skills. All trainees have a good understanding of what they need to do next to gain further knowledge and experience. Staff provide each trainee with clear instruction and scenarios are role-played very effectively to help trainees prepare for anticipated situations in their work. In one particularly good example, a trainee working as a porter rehearsed the route he would take through the hospital to move a patient from a ward to the X-ray department.
- The tutor and job coach have a good understanding of trainees' individual assessment results, informal targets and on-the-job progress but the systems used to record, track and monitor progress and achievement of short-, medium- and long-term goals are not yet fully developed. As a result of this, records do not provide a sufficiently thorough overview of individual progress and the success of the trainees rests too heavily on individual Project team members.
- All staff, including mentors provide effective support to enable trainees to make good progress developing their functional English, mathematics and computer skills. For example, a trainee working in reception uses a computer and telephone to give accurate information to visitors. Trainees' written work is of a good standard and presented well in their individual portfolios.
- Project Search provides very effective workplace learning experiences. Staff use intensive and highly structured approaches to blend instruction, experience, assessment, coaching and support. The curriculum is extremely comprehensive and used flexibly to meet individual trainees needs and interests.
- Mentors and unit managers are highly committed to ensuring trainees are successful. They do whatever they can to help trainees understand and enjoy their jobs. Several mentors have reported that having a trainee in the workplace makes a significant difference to the routine of their daily work and can often enhance the working environment because communication within the team improves.
- Job coaching is highly effective because staff ensure tasks are clearly and accurately identified through detailed step-by-step guidance. The hospital is a very good source of stimulating experiences for trainees, reinforced with highly effective advice and enthusiastic support.

Leadership and management

- Arrangements for leadership and management of Project SEARCH are well established

and several of the recommendations from the last review have been implemented successfully and have improved outcomes for the trainees. The Project continues to receive very strong support from the hospital Education Team and this ensures that the trainees are successful in their work-placements. Leaders and managers work successfully with key partners to ensure that the Project has good capacity to continue to improve.

- The Project has now commenced its fourth year and has established a strong track-record of success for all trainees. The Project is relatively small with only a few trainees each year but the positive impact it has had on the trainees has been outstanding. The Project staff receive good support from the Project Coordinator.
- The Project leaders and managers do not have a detailed development plan to help establish the project's priorities, reinforce key strategies and to measure progress and improvement. In addition, the project's quality assurance arrangements require further development because they are not sufficiently formal to drive further improvement.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Thorough policies and procedures are in place and Project staff, and mentors have a good understanding of the potential risks faced by trainees. Health, welfare and safe working practices are given high priority and trainees develop good awareness of the importance of remaining safe. For example, students know when and how to apply sterilisation solution to their hands as they move around the hospital and recognise hospital staff identity badges.
- Mentors and their unit managers are highly committed and enthusiastic in their support of the trainees. They are very keen to remain involved in the Project, reporting that the experience of supporting trainees is very rewarding because they can see the positive difference it makes. Mentors and their unit managers do not always receive sufficient information about the needs and interests of each trainee, and are not aware of their individual targets or progress. Consequently, on a few occasions, mentors could do more to help trainees if they had a better understanding of their needs.
- Project SEARCH provides highly effective vocational learning experiences. The Project compares very favorably against other projects with similar aims because of the intensive programme of individual and specialised support available to trainees.

Areas for improvement

Arrangements for initial assessment of trainees are incomplete. Information about functional skills, abilities, aspirations and interests is not used effectively enough to inform individual learning plans. Setting of targets for trainees is not yet fully developed.

Systems used to record, and monitor the progress made by trainees and their achievement of short-, medium- and long-term goals remain under-developed.

Mentors and their unit managers do not feel that they receive sufficiently detailed information about trainees such as their initial assessment information and do not always receive sufficient information about trainees' progress.

Several of the mentors interviewed said they would welcome and benefit from more information, training and support for their role so that they can be even more effective.

The Project development plan has not yet been fully implemented so further clarity is still required to help establish the Project's priorities, reinforce key strategies, measure progress and drive improvement.

Quality assurance arrangements do not involve a sufficient number of formal observations of teaching, learning and assessment.

Recommendations and prompts for discussion

1. Ensure initial assessment is comprehensive and that the findings are used effectively to provide accurate and detailed information for individual learning plans, including setting of targets.
2. Improve the arrangements used to record and monitor the progress made by trainees so that staff can determine what is working effectively and where more support is required.
3. Where appropriate, ensure mentors receive sufficiently detailed information about trainees to help provide a more detailed picture of their abilities and potential.
4. Ensure mentors and their managers receive more information, training and support to help prepare them for their roles so that they can be even more successful.
5. Introduce a detailed Project development plan to establish priorities, drive improvement and measure progress.
6. Consider the merits of introducing additional quality assurance arrangements including a self assessment/evaluation process, quality improvement plan, and lesson observations to ensure teaching, learning and assessment remain at least good.
7. Consider developing individual training journals for each trainee which include:
 - Findings from initial assessment of their abilities and achievements
 - Identification of key challenges facing each trainee
 - Brief strategies to inform mentors how they can help each trainee to manage their behaviour and expectations
 - Trainees' key interests and goals
 - Short- medium- and long-term targets for individual trainees
 - A visual training pathway which illustrates progress
 - A reflective log maintained by the trainee

Dr Dan Grant
PhD Safeguarding, Registered Social Worker,
Independent Education and Training Consultant in LLDD and Lead Inspector of Learning and Skills for Ofsted
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