

Over £200K in costs saved by Aster Group

Results & ROI

- Development of a new structure and a reduction in print costs identified savings of over £200,000

The client

Aster Group is a successful group of businesses delivering a range of social housing and care services across southern and South West England. They had been working on continuous improvement for a number of years and were interested in applying Lean Thinking principles and tools more rigorously. They engaged us to support a review of their Group Communications Team to enable a new operating culture.

The challenge

There had been indications that the Group Communications team could work more efficiently. Before making any changes to team structure, Aster wanted to gain a clear understanding of what was being done in the team and how it was done. They wanted to deliver real improvement in performance. A new Assistant Director had been appointed, who decided to undertake a root-and-branch review of the activities and outcomes from the team's work.

The approach

The review was split into 4 phases:

Diagnostic

Key issues that emerged included a lack of strategic focus not enabling development of the service, design and survey processes lacking flow, not being robustly managed, not outcome focused and a lack of work planning leading to poor management of resource.

Redesign

Redesign included a new structure and changes across a number of processes. Developments included focusing on getting agreement with the customer,

at the start of the process, of their requirements, key steps to evaluate, how the process is applied and on outcomes.

Establishing Lean foundation

An Information Centre was set up in the Intelligence and Insight Team with key performance indicators, tracking of survey and profiling work and problem-solving activity.

Implementation

As the new structure was taking shape we worked on matching activities under each job profile and developed clear responsibilities. As the new way of working was matrix-based we also worked through communication activity to ensure members were clear on their role, expected outputs, performance measures, outcomes and evaluation.

The benefits

The benefits were not limited to the significant financial savings. The new structure and way of working led to improved partnership working between the team and the business to produce more effective and appropriate communications, improved evaluation of performance, increased focus on new methods and tools to improve the service provided and a proactive approach to meeting Aster's strategic objectives.