

More productive staff at East Sussex County Council after 5S

Results & ROI

- A more effective and productive working environment
- A significant reduction in stationery being ordered, saving both time and money
- Fewer interruptions for staff permanently based in the office
- A significant reduction in errors being made, for example using out-of-date letters/leaflets

The client

East Sussex County Council is a local authority covering core services across Lewes, Wealden, Rother, Eastbourne and Hastings. They embarked on a Lean transformation across Adult Social Care with the aim of delivering a more streamlined, efficient and person-centred service to its service users.

The challenge

We recognise the importance of improving the environment within which processes operate, as well as the processes themselves. When embarking on a transformation of their Adult Social Care services, East Sussex County Council identified issues that showed them this need to change their environment. As part of the wider transformation, we introduced 5S, a Lean tool used to create order and enable easy identification of waste and any abnormalities within the working area. Roll out of 5S with a number of teams across Adult Social Care formed part of the roll out of Lean Foundation across the department, which also included use of Information Centres.

The approach

A programme was established to implement 5S across all the teams in the Adult Social Care department. To initiate the activity, we held a half-day workshop with each team to train them on the principles of 5S and how it fits in the application of Lean Thinking. This included seeing examples of the impact of 5S, brainstorming examples from their own office and devising possible solutions. 5S comprises a series of actions:

1. Sorting the necessary from the unnecessary
2. Setting items in the most appropriate order and place
3. Shine - 'clean' the office environment
4. Standardise - developing standards, systems and procedures to maintain the first three stages
5. Sustain by developing check and self-audits and continuously improving standards

The benefits

Implementing 5S has a number of cultural benefits. By creating a more visual and orderly working environment, waste is now easily identified for elimination, driving continuous improvement. Pride and ownership is generated in the workplace creating a greater sense of team and individual accountability. In addition to this, East Sussex County Council saved money by redistributing equipment to other teams and created a more pleasant and effective working environment for hot desking staff.

“ I found the 5S exercise to be an excellent team activity. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed being involved in the 'ceremonial' de-cluttering of the Social Care Direct office and in deciding where to relocate what was left. This resulted in two 'mountains' of out-of-date paperwork and unused equipment and provided a surprising amount of space to place close at hand and clearly labelled all the things needed for the team to work even more efficiently. ”

Wendy Shirvani, Social Care Direct Manager