

Developing Information Centres at Blood Cancer UK

Results & ROI

At the start of 2018 Blood Cancer UK embarked on the creation of a new Support Relations Team in their Edinburgh office. Ad Esse supported this change through helping the team develop their Information Centre. A little under a year since the first iteration of the Information Centre we spoke to Jenna Moore, Supporter Relations Team manager, to find out about the positive impact Lean Thinking and the creation of Information Centres has had on her team.

Life before information centres

'The Support Relations Team started life on the 3rd January 2018 and was initially made up of myself as Manager and three SRT Assistants. I had almost five years experience as a Supporter Relations Manager in a larger charity and when the opportunity came up in Blood Cancer UK to build a new team from scratch, it was both terrifying and exciting!

The first few months as a team were challenging as we tried to find our feet and our place in the organisation. As a manager, I often found myself frustrated, as I felt unable to support my team or answer their questions as I was just getting to grips with how processes should work. SRT also inherited large backlogs of work, as well as taking on newly centralised processes such as income processing and fulfilment. I knew we needed more resource to deliver all of the centralised services, but didn't have a way of quantifying it. Within the first six months, two of the SRT Assistants left; this meant I often had to get involved in day-to-day delivery, rather than supporting my team members develop and strategically planning how SRT could support the wider organisation.

Evolving information centre

It was clear we needed a tool that visualised our performance and the pressures we were feeling so that we could take ownership of improvement. Information Centres seemed to be the perfect tool to deliver this. The creation of our Information Centre was a team effort right from the start. We had a great session with Becky from Ad Esse where we learned the principles behind Information Centres before being guided through creating, setting up and holding our first meeting at an Information Centre, bespoke to our team's needs the very same day!

The team were enthusiastic about it but also not quite sure what it would actually be like, particularly the daily stand-ups. At first as the manager I felt a bit like I was doing most of the talking, but we soon settled into a routine of each taking a turn to lead. This helped everyone take more ownership of the Information

Centre and they quickly became more engaged. When the newer team members started, the IC was already up and running so it was part of their induction and they took to it straight away. By making it just a normal part of the day and encouraging the team to use the IC it has just become completely normal and the way we work now.

Impact of having information centres

Having an Information Centre in our team has helped us to communicate better, and to all stay focussed on common goals. It has also enabled us to be really flexible in the way we work as we can handle changing priorities easily by discussing them briefly at the morning stand-up and shifting resource accordingly. It has also helped us to take more ownership both individually and as a team, which has been empowering, particularly when it comes to problem solving.

As a brand new team in January 2018 we have had to develop our team structure whilst getting to grips with lots of new processes. We have continuously added to these processes over the past year, and the Information Centre has helped us to manage our workload in a clear and visual way, allowing us to better support Blood Cancer UK as a wider organisation. By using and displaying KPIs and Measures on our IC we have been able to better understand any backlogs of work, analyse the causes, put solutions in place and track improvement.

Life as a Manager now

I honestly couldn't imagine working without an IC now. As a manager, it is so helpful to have a visual snapshot throughout the day of what the workloads are and where we are in each process. I no longer need to get involved in the day-to-day as the team use the Information Centre to identify how they can help each other and I can instead focus on being a manager and developing my staff and SRT strategy.'