

38% increase in nurse call-backs at British Lung Foundation

Results & ROI

- Increase of 38% in advice call-backs made by nurses
- Increase of 25% in specialist advisor call-backs
- Improved data collection to inform decisions and identify future improvements

The client

The British Lung Foundation is a national charity that promotes lung health and carries out research into lung conditions, as well as providing a support service. Integral to this service is a helpline team based in Liverpool made up of nurses and advisors. Advice varies from providing information about taking oxygen abroad through to providing nursing support to those diagnosed with a lung condition.

The challenge

The small Helpline team handle over two thousand inbound calls a month despite limited promotion of the service. A drive was established to promote the service and support more people living with a lung condition. However, with the small team already running at maximum capacity, it was felt any increase in demand could have a negative impact on both the team and the experience of those using the service. Media articles on productivity had resonated with the team and they recognised that rather than increase staff numbers they could review existing processes to remove wasteful activity and put this to be better use handling increased demand.

The approach

An initial diagnostic of the team found that processes were working well. However, communication and problem solving were difficult as the majority of the teamwork part-time and aren't co-located, with home-based nurses making call-backs. The team were often fixing the same problems or dealing with the same failure demand thus taking them away from their advisory role. A roll-out of Lean Thinking amongst the team was delivered including the set up of an Information Centre and problem-solving training. The Information Centre started with the team clearly defining its purpose. This then allowed them to identify and measure the activity that was taking away from their purpose or not adding value so they could prioritise improvement activity.

The benefits

The Information Centre had a positive impact on the morale of the team allowing them to visually celebrate success for the first time. There has been an improvement in numbers of call-backs made by both nurses and benefits advisors through measuring and removing failure immediately. The Helpline team say they now feel empowered to make future improvements and have shared their experience and improvements at the BLF staff conference.

“ A 38% increase in nurse call-backs is remarkable in itself. However, from my perspective, what is more important has been the change in the attitude and outlook of the team. They are far more solution focussed, using the Information Centre to track problems and monitor effectively the implementation of solutions. They are no longer passive observers in the workspace they are now active participants in change management. ”

Mike McKeivitt, Head of Patient Services