



East Sussex County Council improve adult social care services

Results & ROI

- Appointment dates and times now provided at the point of initial contact resulting in an 88% reduction in chaser calls
- One process for all service users and carers to access assessment and support
- More timely provision of funding for people with identified eligible needs
- Face-to-face ACM (active care management) assessment taking place within 7 days (previously could take up to 28 days)

The client

The Adult Social Care (ASC) department at East Sussex County Council provide care and support to adults and their carers to ensure they can live as independently as possible. They also help those not entitled to support by signposting them to agencies that can. The council sought an alternative model to deliver their Adult Social Care Services by working as efficiently and effectively as possible without compromising service quality whilst achieving £1million savings.

The challenge

To achieve these aims, the ASC department decided to embark on a transformation project using Lean Thinking. This transformation project would also inform a departmental workforce re-design regarding skill mix, roles and responsibilities, and management and staffing structures. The project had very clearly defined objectives focusing on delivering a more streamlined, efficient and person centred service whilst enabling the Lean approach to be evaluated for future use across the wider organisation.

The approach

The diagnostic and re-design phases focused on what service users expect, want and value from Adult Social Care, and what the barriers to achieving those were. These were validated with service user focus groups and then used as a guide to prioritise improvement areas.

The diagnostic revealed that although the team performed well against performance metrics, they operated in a service-led way, rather than focusing on customer value. This created inefficiencies and waste activity, such as duplication and unnecessary hand-offs. As a result service users and carers were not receiving support in a timely manner. Local variations in practice across the County, also meant there was not a consistent approach to support provision.

After getting a better understanding of the issues through diagnostic activity, the redesign phase focused on eliminating waste and redesigning and realigning processes and activity to best meet the needs of service users and carer. Lean Foundations were also introduced including Information Centres, regular briefings and Visual Management such as 5S. These supported a change of culture to allow staff to maintain ownership of processes, continuously identify areas for improvement, and to implement change. Since the new way of working was introduced, there have been a number of changes implemented following suggestions by staff, which has continued to improve service delivery.

The benefits

- Information Centres and regular briefings have improved information sharing and reducing dependence on email updates
- 5S roll-out has reduced stationery costs and improved use of equipment and workspace
- Greater equity of access across service areas (Occupational Therapy, Sensory and ACM) by standardising process for service users / carers to access assessment and support
- Significant improvement in the quality of support plans