



The three stages of IWL

There are three stages of development within IWL that each Trust in the country has to meet. They are:

- 1. Pledge stage** - where the Trust begins to put into place the people, policies and planning to achieve accreditation.
- 2. Practice stage** - where external assessors come into the Trust and assess the evidence presented to achieve the required standards.
- 3. Practice Plus stage** - where the Trust has to demonstrate that each of the seven standards is being met in full.

Which stage is the Trust at?

East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust achieved Practice stage status in December 2002. We are now working towards Practice Plus accreditation. Achievement of this important standard will benefit the Trust's national performance assessment for 2005/6.

How can we move forward?

To achieve Practice Plus, we must present a self-assessment report and a portfolio of evidence. These are then reviewed during site visits by a team of trained validators from other NHS Trusts, who will also hold discussions and interviews with members of staff.

When will we be assessed?

The Trust will be validated for IWL Practice Plus accreditation in September 2005. While it may be stating the obvious, accreditation will only be awarded if the Trust reaches the required standards.

Other benefits for staff

The Trust works continuously on other methods of improving the working lives of its staff - for example, the discounts that are available through many local retailers, gyms and leisure clubs, as well as nationally through NHS Discounts (www.nhsdiscounts.com).

Finding out what staff think

To help the Trust with the self-assessment process, we would like to hear about our staff's experiences and views of working for us. Between now and September 2005, the Trust will be collecting staff opinions on the seven standards by running focus groups for discussions and by using questionnaires/surveys.

Acting on the feedback

All of the information gathered through these means will be collated and reported anonymously. Using this valuable staff feedback, the Trust will then draw up action plans and review policies.

What next?

Achieving Practice Plus is not the end - the Trust will continue to strive to become a model employer.

To take part in a focus group on any of the seven standards, please contact Diane Moore, the Trust's Improving Working Lives development officer, via email: diane.moore@nhs.net

Diane would also like to hear from anyone willing to share their experience of how the Trust has helped them to overcome a problem, or addressed their needs, in relation to any of the seven IWL standards.

Improving Working Lives 2005



What's in it for you?

Why is the NHS implementing Improving Working Lives (IWL)?

In implementing this national standard set by the Department of Health, the NHS is seeking to become the 'employer of choice' by recognising that staff work best for patients when they can strike a healthy balance between their work and other aspects of their lives.

The Seven Areas of Good Practice for Practice Plus



Human resources strategy and management

Contact: Danny Mortimer, Lister ext. 5294

- Reductions in vacancies
- Improved communication with trade unions
- Implementation of *Agenda for Change*

Equality and diversity

Contact: Carmel O'Rourke, Lister ext. 5189



- Address issues raised through the *Staff Attitude Survey*.
- Raise awareness of diversity and equality at Induction and through the training and development programme.
- Ensure all staff have equal access to career progression and personal development.
- Actively support people with disabilities.
- Analyse our workforce information, ensuring it reflects the communities we serve.
- Ensure the *Race Equality Scheme* is embedded throughout the Trust.



Flexible Working

Contact: Sheila Martin, Lister ext. 5188

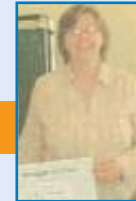
- Flexible working options are embedded throughout the organisation.
- Raise awareness of flexible working options at induction and through the training and development programme.

Staff Communication & Involvement



Contact: Peter Gibson, Lister ext. 5362

- Develop an enhanced strategic communications cascade briefing system for Trust staff, which encourages feedback from staff to the senior management team.
- Further develop the Trust's internal Intranet service as the routine and regular source of information for staff.
- Develop a new website for the Trust, providing far greater information including an 'info@ e-mail' service and clear routes of contact through to the Trust.



Healthy Workplace

Contact: Marie Scales, Lister ext. 4929

- Training programmes and safer systems in place to aid the management of violence and aggression at work
- Support for staff to be rehabilitated back to work following ill health
- Implementation of action plan following the health and wellbeing staff survey
- Subsidised health initiatives such as weight watchers at work, reflexology, Indian head massage and exercise classes and gym membership
- Compliance with the implementation of new deal for doctors

Training & Development

Contact: Wendy Parry, Lister ext. 5391



- Improved communication of training opportunities - combined brochure for 2005, intranet, training leaflet on payslips, *Learning at Work Day*
- More opportunities for a wider range of staff groups - admin & clerical/support staff/HCA development programmes, enhanced management skills programmes, increased availability for mandatory training and a wider range of clinical skills courses
- Re-launch of appraisal in 2004 - with more emphasis on personal development plans

Flexible Retirement, Childcare and Support for Carers

Contacts:

Sheila Martin, Lister ext. 5188 (Flexible Retirement)

Diane Powell, Lister ext. 5803 (Childcare and Support for Carers)



- Increased provision of discounted nursery, holiday playscheme and after school places
- Improved access to childcare co-ordinators and advice, including provision of information and support available via the intranet
- Identification of a wider support network for carers including external organisations and internal expertise as appropriate
- Positive encouragement for staff approaching retirement to take up flexible working patterns