Executive Summary: Workforce Development Interim Evaluation

Ang Broadbridge and Ray Middleton, October 2019

Introduction

This report introduces the new Fulfilling Lives Newcastle Gateshead (FLNG) workforce development (WFD) programme and presents interim findings from its delivery between April 2018 and April 2019. We present quantitative findings from our training evaluation tools and weave in frontline staff and manager experiences across the system. We outline any learning from developing the training and use feedback from participants to establish demand, organisational challenges or opportunities for workforce development and any emerging themes within the system. We use a wide range of tools to review the impact this work is having, including:

- assessing our own internal workforce development
- online survey technology to secure feedback on external training
- capturing reflective commentary on the impact training is having
- developing plans with the people and agencies we train, reviewing effectiveness of any workforce development implemented.

The report points to promising practice and recommendations from the delivery of this more structured programme of workforce development and will be followed up with a final evaluation in 2020. An additional report outlining the FLNG team's workforce development journey will follow in April 2020; our emerging findings are included in this report.

Introduction to the FLNG workforce development work stream

Workforce development is now one of the five key components of FLNG's new programme delivery model[1] for 2018-2022, launched in April 2018, that includes:

- Direct work
- Experts by experience (EBE)
- Research and evaluation
- System change
- Workforce development.

The new workforce development offer builds on the success of our training packages developed over the last four years and having a full-time WFD Lead role has helped increased the reach, influence and quality of the programme through:

- Capacity building: offering ongoing quarterly multi-agency training and some train the trainer sessions for the sector in our five core WFD areas.
- Training all FLNG team members in the WFD areas so they can support the wider system change offer, particularly as direct work numbers reduce.
- Experts by Experience (EBE) Network members (and FLNG team where appropriate) co-producing and delivering training with the WFD Lead, to be supported by apprenticeship roles in the near future.
- Establishing a Multiple and Complex Needs (MCN) core competency framework setting out 25 key skills and good practice examples to share with the sector locally and nationally via the System Change Action Network (SCAN).

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[1] For further information please see www.fulfillinglives-ng.org.uk.

- Developing a good practice guide for employers with emphasis on recruitment support starting with the FLNG Core Partnership organisations.

What is FLNG's workforce development offer?

Our free, comprehensive training and development programme is informed by evidence gathered by our Research and Evaluation Team in relation to What Makes a Good Multiple and Complex Needs Worker[2] and the experiences of our staff and Experts by Experience[3]. We also work to ensure that our local training and development offer connects effectively with the other Fulfilling Lives programmes[4] across the country. This offer is open to all services across Newcastle and Gateshead on a rolling quarterly programme and covers skills in the following five areas:

- **Co-production**: theory and values underlying co-production to help participants create their own co-production action plan to try out and review in their own service.

- **Multiple and complex needs awareness for multi-agency staff**: psychological understanding of people with complex needs from a trauma informed perspective, developing three key sets of skills around engaging, motivating and collaborating with the people we support.

- **Peer research**: key skills including research ethics and bias, interview skills, data analysis and report writing, leading to NVQ level 2 and preparing participants to deliver their own research project.

- **Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE)**: understanding the five key areas of PIE (psychological awareness, staff training and support, learning and enquiry, spaces of opportunity, the 'Three Rs' of roles, rules and responsiveness) and equipping participants to return to their service and talk with staff to co-produce a baseline PIE self-assessment, including plans to improve in each area.

- **Systems thinking**: introduces some theories around system change including soft systems methodology and helps participants create their own plan for change in collaboration with fellow participants.

Key findings

Developing the training: co-producing training with Experts by Experience and internal/external colleagues across the system takes time and effort but the benefits from this investment is clear. This is helping us produce a training package fit for the needs of those who need the training.

Demand for training: our workforce development package is garnering interest and we are seeing promising practice developing in the workforce in more asset focussed support planning and in taking forward actions and learning from reflective practice in casework, reflecting on the positive impact in frontline work. We have trained 125 people to date across our workforce development programme, and surveyed 140 frontline staff about their skills.

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[2] www.fulfillinglives-ng.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/What-Makes-A-Good-MCN-WorkerFINAL.pdf

[3] www.fulfillinglives-ng.org.uk/experts-by-experience/

[4] www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/strategic-investments/multiple-needs

We are building a strong reputation for training with many quarters oversubscribed and interest in ad hoc training coming on stream.

Training area	Sample of agencies who have attended	Numbers of people trained
Co–production	FLNG and core partnership staff, local VCS agencies	15
Multiple and complex needs	FLNG and core partnership staff, health, housing, welfare, social care	51
Peer research	Together in a Crisis evaluation, MoTW access to employment project, Experts by Experience and two frontline staff cohorts including representation from health and housing	21
PIE	FLNG and core partnership, housing, health, mental health and recovery services	38 services
Systems thinking	Delivery starts Oct 2019	

Emerging theme: we are building a solid understanding of the needs of the multiple and complex needs workforce and our learning has the potential to help services/agencies develop their practice in a focussed way. The golden thread emerging from all five of our workforce development areas is the need to build a trauma informed workforce.

Staff skills: through our competency framework we've pin-pointed skills around collaboration and building motivation as two key areas requiring development. It is interesting to see findings from the FLNG team mirroring the findings of other local services and we will drill down further to understand what it is about these two skills areas frontline staff find challenging. Being able to name skills in this way helps to tailor future workforce development activity. There is some crossover here with our Critical Time Intervention evaluation where these skill gaps were also identified; again we will explore further.

Organisational challenges and opportunities: we now better understand the challenges and opportunities agencies have in developing Psychologically Informed Environments and supporting the multiple and complex needs workforce. These include:

- a lack of understanding among staff of the effects of trauma and secondary trauma on staff
- the difficulty of finding good quality training tailored to the job staff actually do e.g. trauma-informed, motivation building and collaborative working tailored to specific roles such as housing support worker or employment coach
- time and workload pressures were a common hindrance referenced that made it hard to reflect, develop skills and learn on the job.

Change: cultural change takes time. Agencies felt it too early to comment on improved practice, so whilst we highlight early promising practice, this report is largely an evaluation of establishing FLNG's new workforce development offer. The next phase of evaluation will review how these changes are embedding and how practice is changing in better supporting people with multiple and complex needs. We will give a full presentation of all training feedback to include facilitation and training tools feedback.

Reflecting on FLNG's workforce development

As well as the wear and tear of frontline work, we are exploring how trauma informed approaches, morale and FLNG staff roles have been affected by the change in our delivery model too. We found our team to have strong skills around building engagement but less

confidence in working collaboratively and building motivation to change. The direct work team joined us as Service Navigators and moved into System Change Practitioner roles through a TUPE process. This role is fundamentally different to the Navigator role, and we found our team felt connected to the programme more through the people they support rather than to a role they didn't originally apply for. PIE explores roles and responsibilities so we can use this tool in the next phase of evaluation to look at what happens when a role changes, and how this impacts on skills and delivery.

Summary of next steps

We identified the golden thread of needing to build a trauma informed workforce running through all five of our workforce development areas; from co-producing training to providing a safe space for peer researchers to reflect, to building skills and capacity to work collaboratively and manage the emotional wear and tear of frontline work. Our next steps for each of the WFD areas are outlined below:

- **Co-production**: we are seeing clear value in the engagement of Experts in all five workforce development areas, and in co-producing our offer and learning with them. Each co-production training attendee will have a follow up with the co-production team and findings will be collated and explored each quarter to establish the impact the training is having locally. This interim report recommends that learning from our test and learn cohort is explored with the wider FLNG team and recommends opportunities to further enhance the training in light of findings.
- **Multiple and complex needs training:** it is interesting that both the FLNG team and wider MCN workforce's self-assessment skills around building motivation and collaboration were shown to be the areas most in need of development. We have taken this on board and now include a section on collaboration skills in the MCN training session. Other ways to build capacity, for example developing modular bite-sized skills training for teams, will be explored.
- **Peer research:** we dedicated much needed resources to develop a peer research network that offers a supportive environment for peer support, learning and reflection. We will evaluate the efficacy of the network in supporting and retaining peer researchers and maintain relationships with peer researchers who move into employment to both continue to build their research skills and explore how to embed peer research within the agencies they now work for. We are finalising a train the trainer programme, as frontline staff have been enthused by their training to build capacity to deliver more peer research projects. Early feedback from the peer research network has indicated that there would be appetite to explore other models of reporting peer research findings including film and presentations. This will be explored over the coming twelve months.
- **PIE:** as we gather more data, we will be in a position to provide thematic overviews by service type, e.g. accommodation, drug and alcohol services. We are piloting a peer review for PIE; buddying up services to support each other to offer peer review and peer support on their reading of their PIE scores and reflecting on what helps and hinders in relation to each of the PIE areas. For PIE and MCN training we listened to feedback from cohort one that asking them to send us a second reading on their progress after six months feels too soon so we will review with services after twelve months instead.
- **Systems thinking**: this training is in development and will be piloted in October 2019 using a similar test and learn model to the co-production training.

For further information about the topics covered in this report please contact Angela.Broadbridge@fulfillinglives-ng.org.uk or Ray.Middleton@fulfillinglives-ng.org.uk.