

The Business of Care

Introduction

If you are a care provider, you are in the business of care. Care is your product, and to sustain your care setting, financial stability is required for growth and longevity.

Within this document, we will explore why it is important to build a culture around your care provision that is rooted in good business practise. We will look at the benefits of increasing the effectiveness of your workforce so that you can concentrate on controlling the business and offer some practical questions to help you streamline your organisation.

Situation

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) have embarked on their 5 year plan, which is projected to result in a greater proportion of people receiving high-quality care by 2021.

As part of this ambitious drive, The CQC have introduced Key Lines Of Enquiry (KLOE's). The changes to the inspection criteria, as well as the introduction of the Care Certificate, have caused some turbulence and confusion within the industry. Only a very small percentage of care providers have achieved an Outstanding rating, some reports suggest that this could be as low as 1% of residential care providers.

Your workforce is the most prized asset within your organisation. Therefore, it is vital that the workforce is made up of fit and proper persons employed and the fit and proper requirement for Directors is followed. Everyone involved in the care organisation should be invested in the output, including those that receive care and their families. The potential lack of quality is the challenge that should be tackled daily by everyone involved.

Practical Questions

- *How will the clients' needs impact on the delivery of care?*
- *Where is the breakeven point in relation to capacity?*
- *What are your business goals for the next 12 months?*
- *What could be improved within the organisation?*
- *How do staff teams and services work together?*
- *What makes you different to other care providers?*
- *Do your current practices, policies and procedures align themselves to your business goals?*
- *Do your staff team have any training gaps?*
- *When was the last time you reviewed the business goals?*
- *What are the internal and external perceptions of your organisation?*
- *How do you attract prospective clients?*



Key Issues

If you were to ask your staff to answer the practical questions above, is it likely that their answers would be different to your own? Would your staff be able to offer useful insight? Would they create suggestions that you may have overlooked?

Inspections revealed that 312 care homes were failing to adequately feed and hydrate residents between January 2015 and November 2016. That accounts for one in 50 care homes, looking after 11,500 people. However, it is not a single member of staff that had been negligent in feeding and hydrating all those service users.

Sometimes the procedures and mechanisms to support the entire organisation are not competent to allow the business to keep functioning within this challenging market place.

Every care shift should be all about positive impact and outcomes for the service users and staff alike.

Good Governance involves ensuring that all aspects of the workplace are overseen and that policies and procedures are implemented and monitored regularly. The monitoring aspect is key. Are the policies and procedures relevant and constructive to what you are trying to achieve as a business?

Considerations

Building the correct culture will improve staff turnover, offering stability for both staff team and service users.

"The culture of a home directly affects the quality of life of residents" **Promoting positive culture in care homes.**

Your staff will be more engaged and more effective. Without effective staff your organisation will be under greater strain and you will run the risk of losing resources. If the staff are empowered through knowledge and share your objectives, their input towards the organisation will be greater compared to if they have not bought in to what you are trying to achieve.

Planning is key. If you don't constantly plan for and review the business, the chances are you will be constantly firefighting.

Simple things, like reviewing your suppliers will offer you an opportunity to uncover inefficiencies, or implement a new way of working that delivers better results. Do you currently have your preferred choice of suppliers? Do the values and delivery of your suppliers align to your business outcomes? How do you currently go about selecting a provider? Using staff training as an example; is the local, £90 per day, one man band, correct for the delivery of an integral part of your staffs' knowledge base? Surely, one of life's lessons is that you get what you pay for.

"Training is tailored to the individual needs and learning styles of staff" **Key lines of enquiry, prompts and rating characteristics – adult social care services.**

Conclusion

To survive in 2017 within the care sector, your organisation needs to be both reactive and proactive...

You will need to be responsive to your current clients' needs whilst planning and sourcing, not only your future clients, but also the supply chain that sits around them. It is your responsibility to record how you do this so that you can review and improve. Part of the CQC's forward plans are; encourage improvement, innovation and sustainability in care. Deliver an intelligence driven approach. Promote a single shared view of quality and to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the CQC. Where appropriate, you will also need to adopt some of these practises so that your business may continue and flourish.

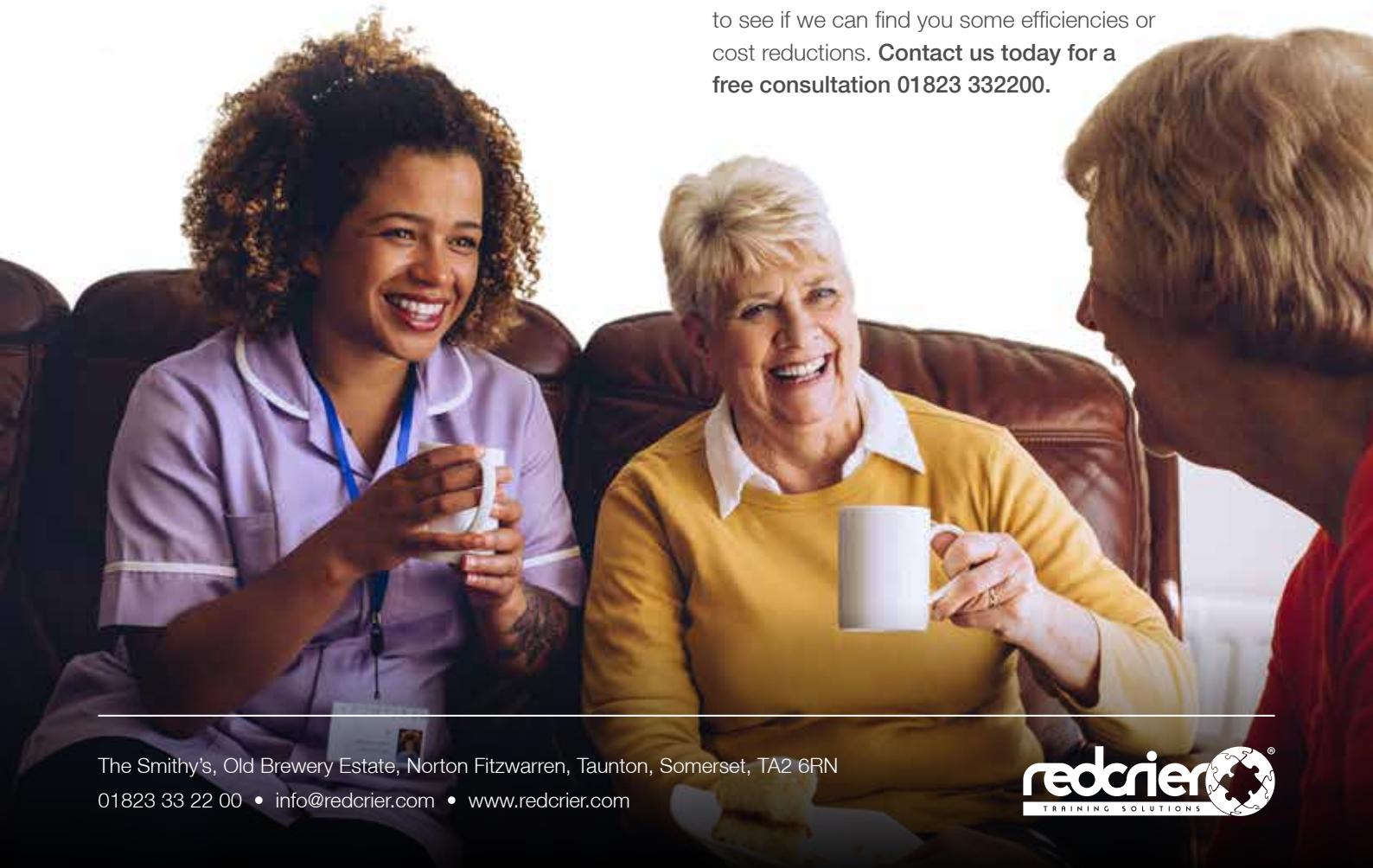
Compliance can be a by-product of quality care and effective business decisions. Sustaining profitability is a constant challenge that requires ongoing planning and reviews. A healthy business is likely to allow investment into further resources which will have a positive impact. Have respect; not only for those within the care setting, but also for what the care setting is capable of.

Aristotle said that, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." To improve your organisation, you could look to improve the individuals so that the 'sum' becomes greater.

The main way to improve would be through training. Jeremy Hunt (Health Secretary) set training as a primary goal for health and social care House of Common's Health Committee Brexit and Health and Social Care Evidence Session, 24 January 2017.

The importance (and impact) of good training and learning taking place will have a huge positive impact on your business. It is quite likely that you have champions within your organisation, but have you got someone championing training and development?

If you would like to review your training supplier as part of your next business review, Redcrier would be more than happy to have that conversation with you and look to see if we can find you some efficiencies or cost reductions. **Contact us today for a free consultation 01823 332200.**



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