

CASE STUDY

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Background

Following a successful first project with the Trust, Meridian began an analysis of the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service. CAMHS is a collection of specialist teams that provide a range of community care for children and young people with complex mental health problems. There are almost 40 WTEs deployed across the service consisting of CAMHS practitioners, therapists, a Learning Disability team, ADHD & Autism Specialists and Consultants.

Historically, the CAMHS team has had a high turnover in operational management, over 40% agency resource and low levels of productivity in the last 5 years. In addition, waiting lists soared leaving over 600 children requiring contact.

Despite various efforts to increase capacity, including the influx of extra resources at twice the cost, circumstances did not change and the level of poor and unsafe practice continued.

A Senior Management transformation plan was developed to re-evaluate the way in which CAMHS deliver care and to develop a robust operational system that utilises resource and avoids excess costs. The Executive Board invited Meridian in to conduct an analysis with the view that new systems and processes would help them answer the questions *“how do we improve the quality of our service delivery?”* and *“how do we know how much resource is required to match the demand?”*

Study Findings

Meridian spent one week on site at CAMHS to conduct an analysis of which commenced on 23rd March. The analysis phase was spent analysing the practitioner’s activity, documented through clinical and non-clinical data entry. Running the analysis on the ground allowed staff the opportunity to express their views towards how the service can improve. The analysis identified the following:

- Significant absence of leadership within the service. Underutilised Band 7s demonstrating no supervisory responsibility;
- No method to measure performance, plan staff utilisation, allocate activity or review caseloads;
- Productivity was not systematically known. Lack of regular follow-up on workload allocation and number of attended contacts per day;

- Poor visibility of capacity vs. demand. Targets and workload not inherently linked to resource availability or demand.

Meridian proposed to develop leadership in the Band 7s to create a middle tier of management within the service. The application of an organisational restructure to bring forth robust clinical and managerial supervision enabling safe and effective practice. Meridian also proposed the implementation of sustainable management controls and behavioural processes to provide the service with reduced waiting lists, increased productivity, staff utilisation and capacity management.

Project

The CAMHS improvement project lasted for 18 weeks and addressed all of the points from the analysis. The Trust / Meridian Partnership successfully achieved all the objectives proposed.

Engaging with the Senior Management team was key in delivering program success within the proposed 18-week period. Through weekly scheduled meetings with the Executive Director, Meridian were able to complete all of the deliverables, plus a number of additional findings, within the planned time scale. A series of six workshops and close one-to-one sessions took place with the operational management and Band 7s of the service. This included training and intensive coaching all of the tools and processes installed to deliver the proposed improvements from the analysis.

Service providers now work in a refined manner to provide only the necessary elements of patient care, with a clear set of service definitions. These management controls outline the number of interventions and length of contact time per treatment, instilling a gold standard of treatment delivery that had never been implemented previously. The enhanced service pathways brought forth change requiring leadership from respected members of the team. Meridian delivered a management training programme to guide the Band 7s through the improvement journey, developing new roles and responsibilities for line management of ground level clinicians.

The team set and agreed a series of direct clinical contact targets by Band and ‘planning norms’ which would be used to measure the performance of the service on a daily basis. The targets were then signed off by the Executive Director, Operational Manager and Band 7s. This meant that both service leaders and team practitioners



held ownership of the agreed service targets and planning norms. These management controls held paramount importance later in the project when the allocation of work based on demonstrated capacity commenced.

Meridian designed and installed a caseload allocation process to provide a new method of work allocation. Practitioners have the ability to weight their caseloads and plan their work content to allow for equitable workloads. Management now own a visible and factual indication of capacity in staffing levels allowing for allocation of cases from the waiting list into assessment and treatment.

Addressing the waiting list was a key project objective for the Trust / Meridian partnership. Together a process was devised for the regular review and allocation of cases. With the caseload allocation tools evidencing substantial clinician capacity, Meridian were able to continuously remove patients off the waiting lists into assessment and treatment. A waiting list supervisor was assigned the role of case review and allocation. This dedicated resource based within the team allowed for the allocation of cases within seconds. The fact and evidence of caseload weight for each practitioner is visibly accessible at any time to identify those best suited to take on assignments.

Meridian also embarked on extra benefits for the client by implementing a mechanism to prevent unnecessary costs. A caseload allocation summary provided Operational Management and the Executive the ability to identify underutilised staff that were providing no contribution to the effective delivery of CAMHS. A savings evaluation was developed and implemented to transpose this information and illustrate the financial loss of retraining underutilised resource.

Results

The Caseload Allocation and Waiting List Management processes realised:

- **47% reduction** in the assessment waiting list, of which the lowest figures achieved in 2015 were seen in the last 3 weeks of the Meridian Project;
- **33% reduction** in the treatment list, once again the lowest ever in 2015. Meridian halved the number of children waiting over 8 weeks to start treatment;
- **43% reduction** in the in-active list in just 6 weeks, significantly reducing the number of patients on caseloads and not having treatment resumed in over 6 months.

Meridian supported the Trust to reduce agency spend, reflecting a c.£144,000 annualised cash

savings to the organisation, that has not only allowed the Meridian project to pay for itself but provides an additional c.£54,000 cash benefit to the Trust.

A Capacity Management tool was implemented to show service leaders the resource requirement to deliver CAMHS. For the first time this has enabled the service to review their current capacity and has prevented any unnecessary recruitment driven by a new philosophy of cost avoidance.

Installation of an effective job plan has enabled practitioners to schedule 52% direct clinical contact with patients, facilitating staff utilisation and increased work output.

Contact Us

For more information on Meridian's work in healthcare, please contact:

James Quinn
Tel. +44 (0) 7971 400428
quinn@meridianpl.co.uk

Meridian Productivity was established 1996, and has been extensively involved in the Healthcare industry across the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, Holland, Belgium, Spain and the Czech Republic. Meridian assists clients across the Healthcare environment (private and public) in achieving improved operating efficiencies and performance, through the development of bespoke management and behavioural processes. These processes are all designed and implemented to ensure that our client organisation can be assured of returning the best performance on the resources applied.

We work with about 20 to 25 organisations a year, both in the public and private sectors, helping them to reduce their operating costs, improve their productivity and provide value for money.

Find out how Meridian can benefit your organisation.

Contact us today:

T: +44 (0) 131 625 8500
E: info@meridianpl.co.uk
W: www.meridianproductivity.com

