

Rachael Willis Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS FT

Speakers

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Making sure that we as an organisation, look to career develop social workers, which I mean, it's been in a sense, it's no, it's no mean feat because to argue the case, many years ago I was with the local authority we were going into integrating with a trust. I had said in a large meeting, we heard that, that moving into an established organisation with its established professional groups, is we were an alien body, inserting ourselves into a NHS organisation, it was a quite a strong possibility would just be rejected. And it or it would just be a bridge head, and we would really struggle to be a presence. And I think, I think the things that we have done in terms of developing, reinforcing our own confidence about ourselves. But that reference to the guidance all the time, is it. It says, in a sense, it recognises that the mental social workers are in NHS Trusts. But it's almost the point that which we point to this thing that we've pointed in saying, well, here's our justification is the national national justification for us being here. And this is the nature of our presence within the trust. And we can use it as a foundation for any of the elements in there. And the typical one is with human resources, because I find that one of the most difficult one ones, is getting them to identify us as social workers on their records, and getting them to give us information about people coming in and out of the trust getting. So giving us data, relevant, important data. So if it's, it's in a national document, it's very difficult to argue against me stating the case. I can as a professional to or as able, as I am to state a case, it carries a great deal more weight, if there's a document that that identifies that and agrees with that. Putting putting forward is really good. It's really good. It resonates absolutely, with my philosophy with with how we've discovered what's going on in the trust, the things that we need to strengthen things that we need in place, it resonates with all of that. It's it's such a perfect template in that sense. And I can't see how any other area of practice mental health social workers within the health setting. And when I when I got into post, there was a lot of a lot of already established provision about what the post would consist of. And it seemed to me that it was to do with some of the the reporting some of the very much into in relation to the mental health legislation, chairing particular forums, being present in various meetings. And it seemed to have an operational and functional role within the trust already set. What it had lost, in my turn, in my view had been its real focus on mental health social work, so charmed various things. And it gave me more of an opportunity to look centrally at what was important for the social workers within the trust. One of the most obvious things was around identity. For

the social workers within the trust, very clear that a number of them are very isolated, that they felt because of the nature of the the integrated service under Section 75 agreement that they they'd lost their social work foundation, and they'd lost some of their social work values, and perhaps even lost the level of their social practice approaches. So, the critical thing for me was to try and focus on the identity make them feel part of a community again, and then when the the integration and the section 75 agreement started to fall apart, they were almost left and this image of left on the beach as this tide of social services went out. So they felt as I said, they felt very isolated. They felt a little stranded because the local authority provided things like training, general CPD opportunities in terms of AHMP practice, supervision, all the mainstay elements of social work practice and supporting such work practice. And fortunately, the network lead the senior person in our network had contemplated and made some contact with the Think Ahead programme. And it coincided with the time that we, we were recruiting or bolstering up our community staff. And we'd had an allocation from the CCG, when additional fund had 24 additional staff allocated to community teams, two of which we harboured away and with the intention of making them consultants social workers with Think Ahead. What resulted as a consequence of that loss is that we've got these two, dedicated members of staff, we've got an influx of students, and it provided a very small grant that we could sideline. And I have to say, I started to surreptitiously hiding this grant, and using it to provide training within within the services and beyond. I mean, in terms of social work practices, we were looking at values, refreshing values in social work practice. We were looking at supporting supervision. And so we did training for supervisors. But we also looked at what I think is a really important and refreshing part of practice, and that was to set up placements within the trust. So very early on, I got an agreement within the trust, which didn't exist before that we could actually pay on an honorarium for placements, which I thought was which, foundational in encouraging people not that they do it for financial gain, but it's supported and encouraged people.