

Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust are part of the Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership (OMHP), which includes Oxford Health, and the charities and community organisations Response, Restore, Connection Floating Support, Oxfordshire Mind and Elmore. This partnership not only allows their local community to receive joined up mental health care regardless of where they are in their recovery journey but also has had a positive impact on supporting individuals into employment.

The charities refer potential employees to the Trust, who work closely with the Occupational Health Department to ensure that the right support is in place. Support includes detailed assessment of workplace settings, additional training and development, and information about Access to Work provision. Oxford Health is now working in partnership with Activate College and the Oxfordshire Learning Enterprise Partnership to introduce supported internships for the City of Oxford's students with a learning disability.

Values

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust work in partnership with five mental health charities; Oxfordshire Mind, Rethink, Restore, Elmore and Connections.

The initial partnership started when Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) was introduced and Oxfordshire Mind and the Trust agreed to operate this initiative in partnership.

Many of the individuals referred to IAPT were unemployed or experiencing difficulties at work due to or resulting in anxiety, something that Oxford Health wanted to address.

Employing staff who have experienced mental health conditions can also be of great benefit to people who are currently receiving mental health services.

People with a learning disability also have a lot to offer and are an untapped pool of talent for the Trust.

What are the challenges?

Employment rates for people with mental health conditions and people with a learning disability are low. People with a mental health condition may not want to declare this and thus may not receive the support they need.

People with learning disabilities may have been conditioned by society to think that they cannot work. Oxford Health want to reinforce to all of their local communities that there is an opportunity to work regardless of your background or difficulties that you have/are experiencing, it may not be paid employment, it could be a work experience placement or volunteering, but everyone has something to offer to an employer.



Solutions

Developing strong partnerships with mental health charities has had a positive impact on helping people experiencing mental health conditions gain work experience and employment.

This partnership has also enabled the Trust to help young people to obtain work experience within the mental health sector as they are not able to support this themselves due to the acuity of their service users.

Although individuals with mental health conditions go through the same recruitment process as anyone else, Oxford Health have formed a very good relationship with their Occupational Health Department.

They do detailed assessments with individuals regarding appropriate work settings, and ensure they are well prepared right from the start. This may include access to additional learning and development opportunities. The Trust also tell people about the Access to Work scheme as very few people seem to know about this.

Access to Work provides a wide range of support that goes well beyond physical adaptations and aids; for example, a support worker to travel with someone who has anxiety about travelling on public transport. The

Trust think it is unfortunate that they can't refer people directly as this would further improve uptake.

Oxford Health don't have robust records of the numbers of people with mental health conditions employed as people tend to not declare this during the recruitment process except to the Occupational Health Department.

Oxford Health aren't able to offer employment to every individual with a mental health condition and they believe that it is important to acknowledge that this is okay. For some people working within a healthcare setting at that particular point in their life may not be right for them or it could be that content on their DBS check will prevent them from working within positions of trust. In these circumstances the Trust doesn't just send the person away, they will undertake a skills audit and suggest other alternative routes into employment.

Oxford Health's Early Intervention in Psychosis team also have their own Employment Advisors who work closely with the HR Team to help young people who are experiencing psychosis to obtain employment, again not necessarily within the healthcare sector.

Oxford Health have also recently launched a new initiative that will see jobs created for patients and service users across their adult mental health services.

These new roles will allow those with knowledge and skills learnt through their own experiences of mental illness to work alongside staff at Oxford Health and help with treatment of others in their care.

The trust is working with Implementing Recovery through Organisational Change (ImROC) to set up this new Peer Support Worker network, with the aim to have our first person in post by the autumn.

More recently, the Resourcing Manager from the Human Resources Dept attended a day on the Learning Disabilities Employment Programme (LDEP) run by NHS Employers and NHS England. The day was jointly run

by people with learning disabilities employed by NHS England.

The manager was very impressed with their skills and abilities, but as a Special Education Needs and Disabilities Advisor had seen how young people with learning disabilities in schools already believe that they could not work.

The day inspired the manager to think about what Oxford Health could do to help their local SEND pupils realise that there are employment opportunities available to them with a varied number of organisations in their local area. The Resourcing Manager is now working with the Equality and Diversity Lead and Community Involvement Manager to set up work placements and develop a supported internship model with the City of Oxford College and local supported employment service.

For further information about this case study, please contact:

Diane Woodward
Resourcing Manager & Armed Forces Champion for Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
by emailing diane.woodward@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk
or calling 01865 902316.

The Valuing People's Alliance

