

Case Study



"....Not shrink from the difficult challenge: continue to seek solutions to problems, rather than excuses for avoiding them...." (Extract from MOIRA's Mission Statement)

The quality journey begins at MOIRA

Established in 1970, MOIRA provides disability support and youth crisis services throughout the southern metropolitan region of Melbourne through a diverse range of community programs.

These programs include in home support, recreation and camps, respite care, community work and crisis support and are delivered by a team of approximately 150 full and part time skilled and experienced staff.



MOIRA's objective is to ensure that all programs are centred in the community, and are client driven and centred.

MOIRA strives to work effectively with people in need and to respond flexibly and swiftly as individual requirements dictate.

Background

MOIRA is contractually obliged to meet the requirements of:

- Standards for Disability Services in Victoria.
- Home and Community Care (HACC) National Service Standards.

James McComb, Manager Corporate Services, is the manager with designated overall responsibility for quality at MOIRA.

He is working with the different program areas within MOIRA to ensure preparedness for accreditation and ongoing compliance.

MOIRA is already accredited to the HACC standards and is about to be audited for the QICSA standards.

Following their successful accreditation to the standards, MOIRA plans to use the lessons learnt from that process to begin preparing for Standards for Disability Services in Victoria accreditation.

"We strive to work with our partners in all aspects of service delivery and policy development (MOIRA's web site)"

Working well

It's early days yet at MOIRA but James is confident that the organisation is headed in the right direction.

Implementing the quality system is supported from the top and achieving accreditation is identified as a key performance indicator in MOIRA's Strategic Plan.

Of great assistance to MOIRA has been the Quality Improvement and Community Services Accreditation (QICSA) process used to prepare for accreditation.

James says that this process encouraged a very positive approach to accreditation preparation and assisted the organisation to implement new and important quality processes.

For example since document control was implemented through the QICSA process, hard copies of obsolete documents have been eliminated and staff know that when they access a document on the quality system that they are using the correct version. Many staff are accessing the new system and seeing the benefits.

Another positive is the way in which the emerging quality system is supporting legal and regulatory compliance.

A project to scope all of MOIRA's many legal and regulatory requirements is contributing to the development of more robust systems including making staff induction easier and more comprehensive.

Challenges

James has found that introducing a new quality system is not without its challenges. Its successful development and implementation demands new ways of thinking and new ways of doing that can only be realised once the old paradigm has shifted and staff have the skills and confidence to embrace the new system.

Moving to a paper-free system is difficult for many. Staff are always on the go and some people love paper. New technology, training and patience are some of the issues that need to be addressed.

Another challenge that MOIRA faces is ensuring a coordinated organisation wide approach. Each of the standards is applicable to a different program area of the organisation and to date, each program area has been working towards accreditation in their own way.

This means that the quality system has been implemented and embraced in different ways in different parts of the organisation.

MOIRA is looking for direction from the Department of Human Services on how to create a quality system that can accommodate, but not duplicate, compliance to all three standards.

This will enable a holistic organisation wide commitment to quality where quality is integrated consistently in the way people do things every day regardless of program area.

Quality culture

James admits that there is more work to do on making quality an integrated part of MOIRA's organisational culture.

The risk is that a quality system can become too focused on the documentation and forget that at the heart of the quality system and the organisation are people.

Therefore the key to changing the culture, he says, is supporting staff to appreciate the direct link between the quality system and what matters most – improving service delivery and client outcomes.

"We need to help staff to look at quality in a way that is relevant to them" (James McComb, Manager Corporate Services)

One cultural challenge is staff resistance to systems and the perception that it hinders real work. The system if developed properly can help staff by meeting obligations such as occupational health and safety compliance and legal compliance, and in fact save time.

The increased monitoring and auditing may raise concerns but if done properly can be a good learning process and add to continuous improvement.



Messages

James is keen to find out from other organisations what they have done to support staff.

Strategies MOIRA is implementing include:

- Making sure quality is a regular agenda item at all meetings and that people are sharing quality information.
- Identifying and celebrating the small wins.
- Finding and training quality champions in each program area to support and drive quality.
- Keeping it relevant and meaningful to staff.
- Cultivating and maintaining support from the top.
- Demonstrating and promoting how quality adds value to the organisation.
- Demonstrating and promoting how quality helps staff to do their jobs better.
- Setting quality targets and action plans.
- Making concrete first steps to be built on that can be documented as evidence.

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