

# Capacity Building Project



## GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

### Case Study 11

**The Organisation:**

Anglia Care Trust

**The Challenge:**

Improving the quality of services and organisational management

**The Response:**

A range of policies and procedures relating to service users, staff and organisational management

**Examples of Good Practice:**

1. A comprehensive set of policies and procedures
2. Engaging Trustees and staff in policy matters
3. Accreditation with quality standards

**Date:**

17 May 2006

Supported by:



Part of the Department  
for Work and Pensions



EUROPEAN UNION  
European Social Fund

## **The Organisation:** Anglia Care Trust

Anglia Care Trust is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. It has been operating for more than 30 years within the community justice sector, working closely with a number of public, private and voluntary sector agencies to support offenders, ex-offenders and those at risk of offending.

The core activities of Anglia Care Trust are:

- Providing Information, Advice and Guidance on learning, work, money, welfare rights and housing
- Improving Skills for Life (literacy and numeracy) through assessment and mentoring
- Providing accommodation-based and non-accommodation based housing services
- Providing Appropriate Adult services for young people and vulnerable adults
- Mentoring young people and supporting families at risk of anti-social behaviour

## **The Challenge:** Improving the quality of services and organisational management

In 2003, Anglia Care Trust was working towards achieving accreditation under three quality standards, Investors in People (IIP) for its people management, the **matrix** Standard for its Information Advice and Guidance services and the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) for its Supporting People services. All three standards required the organisation to have effective policies and procedures in place on a range of matters affecting staff, organisational management and service users.

The organisation already had a range of policies and procedures in place relating to staff and organisational management but fewer policies and procedures relating to its services users. Existing service user policies related to particular services offered by the organisation rather than being generic policies applying across the whole organisation.

## **The Response:** A range of policies and procedures relating to service users, staff and organisational management

In preparation for quality accreditation, all existing policies and procedures were reviewed and updated and priorities for new policies and procedures identified. Some key policies relating to service users were implemented including a Child Protection Policy and a Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy and policies on service user feedback and complaints. The Trustees delegated responsibility for policy development to the senior management team and staff were kept fully informed of changes to policies.

Implementing policies and procedures was not just seen as a way to achieve accreditation, however, but was seen as an essential way to ensure the quality of Anglia Care Trust's management and services. For example, **matrix** assessors are looking to see the tangible outcomes of the organisation's policies, processes and procedures, rather than a portfolio of evidence describing those processes. Anglia Care Trust now has comprehensive policies and procedures relating to staff, organisational management and service users and has achieved accreditation with IIP, **matrix** and QAF.

## Examples of Good Practice:

Anglia Care Trust's policies and procedures ensure quality services are delivered to clients and the quality systems of IIP, **matrix** and QAF provide frameworks for the organisation to continuously improve the quality of its services. Trustees maintain a strategic oversight of the organisation's policies and communication with staff about policy developments ensures that staff are able to work to and engage with the policies.

### 1. A comprehensive set of organisational policies and procedures

Some key policies and procedures that have a practical impact on the quality of service management and delivery are those relating to staff and service users. These policies are central to the quality of Anglia Care Trust's services. Below are just some examples of the types of policies that are in place:

#### Staff

- Code of conduct
- Equal opportunities policy
- Exit interviews
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Personnel induction programme
- Lone worker policy
- Training policy
- Working from home policy

#### Service users

- Child protection policy
- Comments
- Complaints
- Compliments
- Confidentiality policy
- Health and safety for service users
- Protection of vulnerable adults policy
- Suggestions

New policies were implemented regarding complaints and feedback from service users. This involved introducing a feedback box which is located on the ground floor of the building that services users can use to make comments, compliments or suggestions. Feedback is reviewed regularly in management meetings and collated and fed back to staff and service users on a quarterly basis. There is a separate complaints procedure to ensure complaints are acted upon promptly.

Staff are provided with a manual of the organisation's policies and procedures at induction and are required to sign that they've received and understood their contents. In general, the policies and procedures manual is well received as it makes it clear for staff what's expected. Although the manual is comprehensive and up to date, Anglia Care Trust sees its policies and procedures as being in continual process of development; it is, in a sense, a job that is never completed.

### 2. Engaging Trustees and staff in policy matters

The Trustee Board relies on the competence of its senior managers when it comes to operational policies, but where policies impact directly on The Trustees' governance responsibilities, for example financial procedures, the Trustees take a keen interest. Trustees also have a role in reviewing policies as part of their strategic oversight of the organisation's activities. The current Trustee Board is aiming to review all policies annually.

Staff are kept fully informed of changes to policies and procedures. Changes to policies are usually communicated through managers who are responsible for discussing these changes with their teams, but if there is a new policy or a major breach in policy has taken place, policies may be issued directly to staff. From time to time reminders about policies and procedures are communicated to staff, again through managers, particularly if it becomes apparent that the policies are not being followed.

Training on the organisation’s policies and procedures is considered very important. For example, as a result of training around the child protection and protection of vulnerable adult policies, staff are acutely aware of these issues and are vigilant about implementing the policies. Staff have to “think outside the box” when implementing these policies; for example, staff who work with sex offenders, helping them to maintain tenancies, need to be aware of potential risks if service users have contact with children.

### 3. Accreditation with quality standards

Anglia Care Trust has achieved accreditation with IIP, **matrix** and QAF. The IIP standard is a well-known business improvement tool that helps organisations gain more from their people in support of business goals. As an Investor in People, Anglia Care Trust aims to be an “employer of choice”. By improving the way it manages and develops its staff, the organisation has managed to reduce its staff turnover. In their housing service, the role of housing officers is particularly demanding and previously the life expectancy of housing officers was only 18 months. This has now been increased to 2½ years.

The **matrix** Standard is the national quality standard for organisations that deliver Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) on learning and work. Seeking accreditation under this standard was seen by Anglia Care Trust as a way to gain recognition for the quality of its IAG services and as a useful framework for continuously improving those services.

The QAF sets the standard in the delivery of Supporting People services and is a requirement for all organisations receiving funding from Supporting People. The standard ensures that providers deliver services to high standards and in accordance with contractual expectations. There are key performance targets to be met by the organisation, by teams and by individuals. This requires awareness of the policies and procedures which help ensure quality standards are met.

### Sharing the Learning:

Anglia Care Trust has achieved good quality standards in its management and service delivery as demonstrated by its achievement of three quality standards. The organisation has a range of policies and procedures in place that ensure continuing high quality standards.

**Lessons Learnt**

Policies and procedures provide a way to improve the quality of organisational management and service delivery

Getting feedback from service users or customers is an important way to improve the quality of services

People at all levels of the organisation should be engaged in the process of policy development and implementation and kept fully informed of changes

Quality standards provide a useful framework for improving the quality of management and services

**Questions To Consider**

- What policies and procedures do you have and what further policies do you need to implement?
- How often are they reviewed?
- Do you have procedures for seeking feedback from service users or customers?
- Do you have a complaints procedure?
- Do your trustees maintain strategic oversight of your policies and procedures?
- Are staff informed of policy changes and provided with appropriate training and information?
- Have you achieved any quality standards?
- Would IIP, matrix, QAF or any other quality standards help your organisation improve quality?