

Sustain STEPS[®] to Excellence in the NHS



Health visiting staff have spoken of the immense benefits which an inspirational personal effectiveness and behavioural change course has brought to their team after they became the first service in the country to pilot the unique programme.

East Coast Community Healthcare (ECCH), which provides services in Great Yarmouth and Waveney, started piloting Sustain STEPS[®] to Excellence in late 2012.

Specifically adapted for NHS health visiting services by business consultancy Sustain, the three-day course is designed to ensure staff are well placed to respond to the challenges of the health visiting 'call to action'. It aims to:

- give health visitors the confidence to deal with change, embrace leadership and take responsibility for driving the healthy child programme and call to action
- increase motivation and ensure staff are able to work successfully in partnership, in turn helping them provide high quality services

Four senior members of ECCH staff have also now completed a further 'train the trainer' programme, which has accredited them as Sustain STEPS[®] facilitators and gives them the opportunity to run the course internally. As well as ensuring consistency and quality, this additional element provides value for money and a better return on investment during times of squeezed budgets.

The facilitators are now taking responsibility for rolling out the popular course to all 100 members of ECCH's health visiting and associated support team. And feedback so far has been excellent, with every participant recommending the course and 99.5% agreeing it delivers its aims.

"The course was absolutely brilliant, and has had a big impact on my work, helping me cope with the pressures of my job much more effectively," said ECCH community nursery nurse Rachel Moody. "I'm more positive, more relaxed and don't let things get to me – instead of panicking, I take stock and talk myself through things. This has been reflected in the workplace and is benefiting the children I care for and is also helping us relate to each other better as a team."

For health visitor Carey Roberts, the course has helped her make positive permanent changes both inside and out of work.

"Sustain STEPS[®] is designed to empower you so you can visualise these changes," she said. "It does this by opening up the way we think and breaking down the thought process to help us understand why we have predisposed thoughts.

"I would recommend the training to everyone. It will stretch your comfort zones safely, raise confidence and self-esteem and enable you to be more open to change."



Pamela Agapiou, ECCH's Director of Universal Children's Services, has also spoken highly of the benefits the programme has brought the service.

"The course gives you back the ability to remove yourself mentally and really focus on what you're doing rather than just diving in and doing," she said. "This is ideal for health visiting where, whenever possible, we should take the time to stand back and think rather than feeling the need to do things right now.

"Sustain STEPS[®] is a thought-provoking, mindful life skills course which is about valuing yourself, your staff and your clients so that you support others to find their own solutions. It opens people's minds in a caring, nurturing and creative way while giving them transferrable skills they can apply to both their personal and professional lives.

"By setting goals and focusing on positive affirmations, this powerful course helps you learn to deal with the negative voices we all have in our head and get the drive we need to move forwards. I would highly recommend it to anyone."

Sustain STEPS[®] has been specifically adapted for the NHS from an acclaimed programme created by The Pacific Institute[®]. In addition to the health visiting adaptations, Sustain has also contextualised the STEPS[®] course for delivery to healthcare assistants as part of a national pilot to strengthen pre-nursing education. The newly adapted course will be launched in January to a cohort of 43 healthcare assistants across East Anglia.

For more information, contact Sustain on 01603 897415 or email steps@sustain-improvement.com