



NCVO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Good employment practice case study: Retention

Lou Haller, Office Manager at Children's Links has kindly provided the following case study.

Children's Links aims to improve the quality of children's life experiences. Children's Links is a very creative and active voluntary sector organisation that delivers products and services to really make a difference.

Children's Links Consultancy Programme offer a range of services to help you deliver outcome focused and integrated projects within the 'Every Child Matters' framework. Children's Links has a wide range of experience in strategic management, income generation, training and project management, and are experts in partnership working.

If you would like to find out more about Children's Links, please visit www.childrenslinks.org.uk.

What happened?

As part of our ongoing strategy for improving the performance of the organisation, we specifically concentrated on staff retention and looked at what improvements could be made in various areas of working which would produce a positive impact.

Who was involved (e.g paid staff, volunteers, trustees)?

The HR department and the management team.

What planning took place?

The Office Manager produced information from statistical reports, such as absences etc, as well as feedback from exit interviews, staff surveys and reports from our IIP review and ALI inspections. The Management team discussed these issues and an action plan was developed.

What went well?

Staff motivation increased by holding regular meetings with line managers, rather than relying on appraisals for looking at progress.

What did not go so well?

Return to work interviews are unpopular and tend to get overlooked, unless HR prompts them.

What would you do differently?

We are always reviewing our procedures so any changes needed were implemented at the time.

How was it implemented (e.g. was any support needed)?

In an attempt to look at what we could do as a good employer, it was apparent that a variety of measures were needed, including training managers on appraisal skills.

We introduced an organisational training-mapping plan, which included joint targets such as assertiveness training for all staff. It was important to look at each individual's training needs and the tasks that they were undertaking, ensuring they were being stretched but also that their tasks were appropriate for their level.

We also encouraged more informal communication within the office environment, resulting in more one-to-one meetings and encouraging progress. We also introduced 'return to work' meetings, as there were more than 3 separate absences within a year.

This involved discussing reasons for absences to see if help/support could be given to prevent future occurrences.

Our exit interview procedure was reviewed, so that the HR Officer now conducts the interviews (instead of the line manager) and more probing questions were asked.

The Office Manager is then required to follow up any issues that may arise and report to the management team for agreement on any improvements or changes to practice.

What has been the overall impact?

A more motivated workforce and hopefully improved staff retention figures for this year.

Are you planning any future developments to maximise the impact of this process?

To be discussed – probably more training for managers and supervisors.

What one piece of advice would you give organisations in a similar situation?

Don't wait to implement changes. Encourage all your managers to have regular meetings with staff to ensure they have an understanding of motivation and leadership issues.

About HR and your workforce

How many paid employees do you have?

51-100 full-time; 11-20 part-time

How many trustees sit on your board?

8-10

How many volunteers do you have (non-paid staff, excluding trustees?)

1-10

Does your organisation have an HR strategy?

Yes

Does your organisation have a recruitment policy?

Yes

Does your organisation have a diversity policy?

Yes