Quality improvement in the recruitment of consultant psychiatrists
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Introduction
Tees, Esk & Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust provides mental health and learning disability services to County Durham, Teeside and North Yorkshire. Difficulties in recruitment to consultant psychiatrists has been a national problem for years but particularly since the significant growth in services in the 2000s.
TEWV Trust has regularly had insufficient high quality applicants for consultant appointment and associated with this has a variable standard for consultant appointment with the potential for substandard appointment. Although the recruitment process was modelled on national guidance, it has not maintained the confidence of the Trust Board, particularly the non-executive directors who chair appointment committees.
The aim of the project was to develop a new consultant recruitment process which would
- Have the confidence of key stakeholders: Trust non-executive directors, executive management team, senior clinical leaders, consultant medical workforce
- Standardise the process, scoring and threshold for appointment
- Lead to a higher standard for consultant appointment
- Guide the new consultant’s first year personal development plan

Imagery methodology
Consensus development on competency framework (Nov – Dec 2011)
Review of existing guidance from GMC, RCPsych and other sources.2 6
Presentation to & discussion with
Clinical leaders (clinical directors and associate clinical directors)
Trust Board
Senior Medical Staff Committee
Final agreement on competency framework and recruitment process (Feb 2012)
Meeting of project steering group (representing each clinical division) facilitated by Jenny King from Edgecumbe consulting.
Writing project materials: competency framework, person specification template, shortlisting scoring framework, interview guide & scoring framework, interview guidance for applicants and panel members.
Training in competency based interviewing (Mar – Apr 2012)
Training for non-executive directors, clinical leaders, operational directors, heads of service. 30 senior staff trained to date.
Implementation of new process by medical staffing team (May 2012)

Implementation
Key changes
Person specification now based on the competency framework
Short-listing based on 10 elements derived from competency framework which can be assessed from written application form
Short-listing scoring on 4 point scale: unsatisfactory, borderline, satisfactory, excellent (range 0 – 30, minimum score for short-listing = 15)
Interview day to consist of
Informal “team panel” interview assessing competencies A1, A3, C8, C11
Formal interview
Presentation (10 minutes) to assess competencies B5, B7, D13, D14
80 minute interview to cover all competencies break after 40 – 45 minutes to review progress and team panel feedback

Impact
Quality
Expectation is for higher quality candidates to be appointed to consultant psychiatrist posts. All consultants appointed will have achieved a minimum standard on each of the 4 domains of the consultant competency framework.
Delivery
Expectation is for better awareness of new consultant’s development need on appointment. Performance at interview will inform first year development plan for new consultant.
Cost
Expectation that fewer consultants will be subject to conduct or capability procedures resulting in reduced costs long term.

Competency framework
Clinical skills, knowledge and experience
A1 communicating in clinical settings
A2 clinical decision making
A3 managing uncertainty and complexity
A4 meeting quality standards
Academic skills and life long learning
B5 teaching and training
B6 using learning to change practice
B7 using evidence to change practice
Professional and personal qualities
C8 empathy and sensitivity
C9 personal organisation
C10 coping with pressure
C11 team working
Leadership
C12 self awareness
C13 influencing and persuading
C14 commitment to quality
C15 organisational commitment

References

Leading innovation in health care cohort 2: Durham Centre, 9th May 2012

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