Overview

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust (UHMBT) recognised the need to share their diversity and inclusion experiences and successes with other partners and alumni from the partners alumni programme. To facilitate this, they hosted their first national NHS Employers inclusion and diversity alumni event, where many organisations from across the UK were invited.

Key benefits and outcomes

- The event was well attended with representatives from 30 organisations across the UK, including NHS trusts, the Red Cross, CCGs and the Ambulance Service.
- The event triggered the start of a programme of annual alumni conference.
- The event has been a catalyst for the trust receiving several invitations to attend inclusion conferences and events in other organisations, helping to secure ongoing connectivity.

What the organisation faced

In July 2016 the trust agreed a five-year plan ‘Towards Inclusion’ which articulated their strategic diversity and inclusion intentions, with the aim of being effortlessly inclusive.

The trust had actively participated in the NHS Employers diversity and inclusion partners network and partners alumni programme. During this time, they received support to progress and develop their equality performance and built relationships with other organisations.

In July 2017, as part of their first annual review, UHMBT recognised they should share their diversity and inclusion experiences and successes with other partners and alumni from the programme, and for that reason their strategic inclusion theme for 2017/18 was ‘Beyond Boundaries.’
What the organisation did

The trust decided to host their first national diversity and inclusion event, and were keen to ensure delegates were stimulated and engaged. The format of the day involved a number of inputs and activities which included:

- **NHS Employers – early indicators from a national mapping exercise**
  The findings from the mapping exercise helped set the scene and gave delegates something to think about from a national perspective, it also provided some context for the remaining part of the day, but also for the coming weeks and months.

- **A contextual drama performance by Breeze Productions**
  The performance was entitled ‘What’s diversity got to do with it?’ A multi-strand and cross-cutting performance, covering many areas of disadvantage, which served as a sombre reminder as to why they needed to continue efforts to address inequalities and discrimination.

- **Purple Space - The power of networks – delivered by Kate Nash**
  A presentation by professional networkologist Kate Nash OBE from PurpleSpace. Kate shared top tips on establishing networks and the difference they can make for both staff and patients.

- **Multi-cultural lunch break**
  After the power of networks session their catering team provided a well-received multicultural lunch. The menu choices were selected based on some of those countries which represent the top ten NHS staff nationalities.

- **The UHMBT journey and experience**
  In the afternoon delegates moved into smaller groups, and spent some very UHMBT focussed time with their committed and experienced network leads and members. As an introduction to those smaller workshop sessions, delegates were given an overview of the UHMBT journey, with a specific focus on the Towards Inclusion strategy and the inaugural annual strategy update.

The emphasis of these sessions looked at their network origins, what had gone well during their creation and also respective reflections on what they would have done differently.

The networks showcased on the day were those that were more mature in their establishment, such as BME, LGBT and disability staff networks and also the Equality of Access to Health network. Each of the networks had a very different story to tell, so delegates felt they gained a really valuable and varied insight into the UHMBT inclusion journey.
Overcoming obstacles

On the back of national recognition for being the UKs eighth most inclusive employer, UHMBT were keen to share experiences and learning with other organisations. Having been part of the NHS Employers diversity and inclusion partners programme for two consecutive years there were clear links and networking connections already in place.

However, the planning committee was conscious of the competing demands on already pressured staff and alumni partners time, so a comprehensive awareness raising and promotion campaign commenced in September with a clear countdown to the event through the use of twitter and network connections.

Takeaway Tips

• Networking – sharing and supporting is critical.
• Senior leadership – active involvement and understanding must be secured.
• Organisational values – need to be inextricably linked to this agenda.
• Human identity is important.

Further information

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