

Qualification: CIPD Diploma in Applied Human Resources

Module Name: Understanding Resourcing & Talent Planning
(Unit 5KRTP)

On the job training activities

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Signed: 
Date: 18 April 2020

1. Evaluation of how the approach to succession planning has changed at the National Autistic Society (“NAS”)

The NAS has historically adopted an adhoc approach to succession planning for a variety of reasons. The first being the high levels of turnover, which at one point, surpassed the care sector average of 31% (Skills for Care, 2018). A key factor in this is the expectation of the organisation to fulfil frontline support roles in environments where the people we support display challenging behaviour, whilst paying minimum wage for entry level roles.

The view of previous HR Directors was that investing resources into devising cohesive succession plans would not realise a return on investment for two reasons:

- (i) that line managers lacked the skills and capacity to effectively identify and equip those employees with potential to operate at the next level up, with the opportunities they would require to develop them for the next chapter in their career;
- (ii) that succession planning would not translate into improved retention rates at the first level management tier and consequently, would not support a reduction in turnover costs.

Thankfully, the organisation has undergone a number of changes to both its operational and people management processes over the course of the past 18 months and it is now acknowledged, that in order to retain our market position as the leading autism charity in the UK, wholesale changes had to be undertaken in respect of overhauling the culture (which Taylor & Woodhams (2016)

identified as being a key factor, along with leadership, in job satisfaction levels), whilst reviewing the systems and processes that supported the people function.

A variety of measures have been implemented, including an exercise to refresh and rebrand the values of the organisation, which employers maintain top the list for attracting talent (McCartney, 2017), implementing a digitised system and appointing HR managers across the eight areas of the UK to focus on particular workstreams.

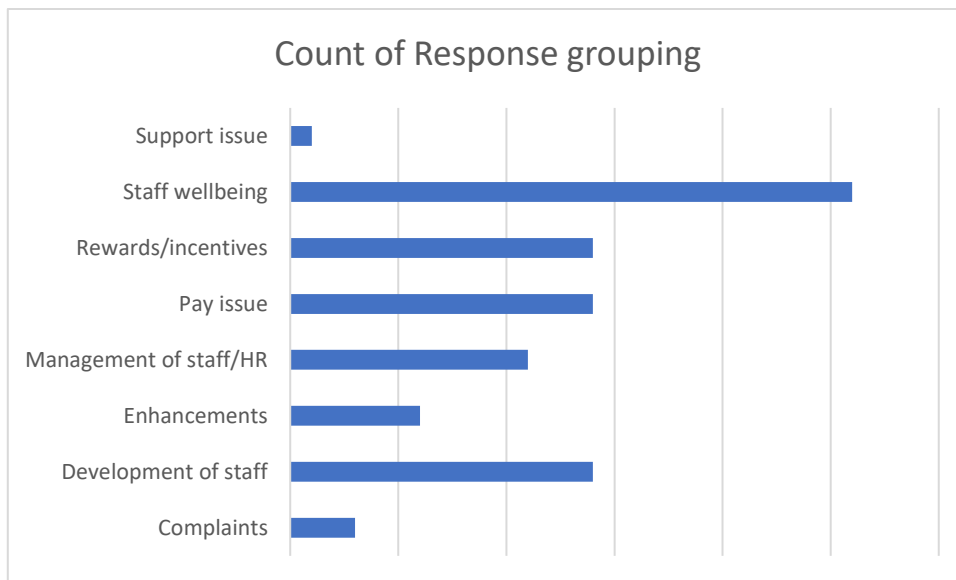
I am the UK lead for Retention and Recruitment and a number of related initiatives have been developed in Wales and then rolled out across the organisation. The two that have specific relevance to succession planning are as follows:

- Following the guidance contained in recent research that highlights the need for organisations to engage with managers to determine what their needs are (CIPD, 2018a; Tucker, 2019), leadership and management training was introduced. This five day workshop covers off multiple aspects of people management, including how to effectively conduct supervisions and coaching / mentoring training. A competency framework has been devised and woven into operational supervisions. The framework comprises 10 sections (plus a CPD component) which staff are required to work through with their mentor (line manager) over 12 months. Following conclusion of all competencies, they can request the next tier up and begin to develop higher level skills. They are then included in a talent pool for progression and when attending interviews, they present the framework to evidence their progress.

- Coupled with an creating a higher trust culture, defined career pathways and increased exposure to diverse work exposure (including: shadowing, secondments), the pool of talent has increased and turnover has reduced to 28%. One of the enablers of success has been to align these career pathways with the organisational processes and a refreshed culture which is an approach advocated by the CIPD (2020).

2. Findings following review of recent leaver stats

The prevailing reasons for people exiting the organisation during the 2019/20 financial year are outlined below and are comparable with the stats from 2017/18.



According to the CIPD (2018b) employer focus needs to include career development, opportunities for flexible working and initiatives to manage employee wellbeing if organisations wish to reduce dysfunctional turnover. Studies conducted within the public sector in recent years, corroborate this view (Atkinson, et al, 2016; NHS, 2017; Scottish Care, 2018).

The Wales senior management team, of which I am part, have devised and implemented a number of initiatives that support employees in the areas where improvement is required.

As highlighted previously, defining career pathways (with accompanying enhanced opportunities for development / inclusive competency frameworks as outlined previously) and running leadership & management training for managers, which the CIPD (2015) advocates as being essential if they are to feel empowered and engage their teams, were two such focus areas.

It is heartening, that in a UK wide engagement survey (for 2020/21) conducted in October last year, the questions relating to establishing whether line managers felt equipped to deliver against their mandate and the ones relating to people feeling like they were being afforded development opportunities to progress their career, all yielded a favourable increase in percentage points year on year.

My learning and development						2019 Overall Positive %	Traffic Light	2017 Overall Positive %	2016 Overall Positive %
My learning and development						65		0	+6
11. I am supported by my line manager to continue learning more about autism						73		-	+5
12. Our charity gives me the learning and development opportunities necessary for me to do my job effectively						70		0	+5
14. The training and development I am given supports me in my role as a line manager						66		-	+11
13. Our charity gives me opportunities to develop skills and knowledge that will help in my future career						62		-	+3

Workplace wellbeing is a more recent key focus area (particularly in light of the low engagement survey scores in relation to employees reflecting that the charity fails to “walk the talk” in terms of caring about their wellbeing) and the mandate here was to devise a clear path for incident and accident support in the workplace, whilst introducing wellbeing coaching.



It was apparent that employees needed to see management displaying an increased awareness of staff wellbeing, reinforced by activities that demonstrated management's investment in the wellbeing, health and happiness of our workforce. A few of the enablers that reflected this commitment are as indicated below:

- Increased quality assurance of Supervisions, Appraisals and staff one to one meetings to ensure that a balance of performance, practice and staff wellbeing is achieved through these processes.
- Greater use of Debrief processes and where appropriate increased use of staff redeployment strategies and time away from individuals or services.
- Development of Team Charters across services that allow staff to gauge and monitor management performance and where necessary, implement Team Building activities to raise and maintain staff morale.
- Improved management relationships with staff and better understanding of policy implementation, mental health issues and motivation factors

According to Allen, et al (2010), adopting an evidence-based approach to retention should include the principles of (i) a shared understanding amongst stakeholders as to what the drivers for turnover are (ii) understanding what the

underlying principles are and (iii) tailoring a retention strategy to the context in which the organisation operates.

In my view, whilst there remains scope for retention rates to improve further, the work that has been carried out thus far is indicative that the above 3 principles have been considered and underpin the thought processes as to how to create the biggest impact.

3. Record of discussion with HR Director in respect of the above, referencing CIPD Profession Map

The HR director (Bethany Allun) and myself have standing bi-weekly check-in sessions and last week's session focused on a review of my contribution as captured above, as well as how the current pandemic was providing an opportunity to further shape our activities in a manner that leverages off the skills attained by staff through this crisis whilst seeking to identify financial incentives and bespoke career development opportunities for our high performing talent pool.

Bethany initially reflected on the diversity of my role as HR lead for Wales combined with a recruitment & retention focus and the benefit that that has had in providing an opportunity to engage with managers across different areas of the UK whilst delivering leadership & management training and consolidating this feedback to take back to the Wales SMT, which has facilitated us being able to identify gaps, devise solutions and pilot any resultant programmes in Wales prior to rolling them out across the UK. In her view, this has enable me to achieve a chartered level of impact in a number of the standards contained within the Resourcing and Talent Management specialisations of the CIPD Profession Map (CIPD, nd) - for example: how to use workforce planning data to inform resourcing approaches; how to design flexible approaches to succession and contingency planning.

Looking ahead, we both acknowledge the importance that upstaffing is key within the current climate whilst ensuring that we are able to stabilise our turnover which will require a review of our reward and recognition policy and a redesign of job roles as a number of people have excelled in terms of their

practice and the communication strategies they have adopted with the people we support to ease their concerns around the wearing of PPE, for example, so consideration is now being given to developing Practice Leads that will move between services conducting role modelling exercises and 3-stage competency training in positive behaviour support techniques.

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