



A HEW Case Study: The DACHS Energise Programme

Background

Most organisations have Missions, Values and Leadership behaviours. But those are often given mere lip-service. “Incidents” and exit interviews often reveal that they are rarely lived, observed, or experienced, especially when the pressure is on. That happens despite research showing that a values-based, healthy, and ethical workplace culture improves people’s well-being, drives up engagement, and leads to optimal performance,

DACHS, the Directorate of Adult Care and Health Services, in Reading Borough Council’s (RBC), has over 300 staff. These work in a variety of central, remote, and home locations.

Soon after joining DACHS, as Executive Director, Seona Douglas believed after talking with staff in her quarterly “Meet the Director” sessions that the working environment and culture could be significantly improved. Changes to processes, systems, and communications had been made and general leadership training had been provided. But she knew that something more was needed!

As one of her outreaches, she attended a “Healthy and Ethical Workplace (HEW) - Thriving *at Work by Design*”)” workshop run by Ethical Reading.

The purpose of this workshop is to transform the way individuals and organisations think about health and wellbeing. Seona was so impressed that she invited Ethical Reading to work with the DACHS management team to refine and implement a culture change programme, “DACHS Energise – It Starts With Me”.

The vision for this “DACHS Energise” programme is to create a Healthy and Ethical Workplace through the behaviour of all managers and all staff where:

“Everyone is respected, treated fairly and with compassion. Everyone accepts their responsibilities whilst acting with integrity in a spirit of collaboration. People understand how their role fits into the overall purpose of the department.”

The programme comprises a blend of:

- Communications
- Knowledge sharing and skill development workshops for managers and for all staff;



- An 18 month to 2 year embedding plan.
- A series of tracking assessments to monitor progress.

Ethical Reading's Role

Ethical Reading partnered with RBC's Organisational Development & Learning team to:

- Tailor the "HEW - Thriving at Work by Design" workshop to DACHS's needs.
- Resource the training for managers and staff through its domain-expert network. Average delegate ratings were consistently in excess of 4.4 out of 5;
- Provide specialist mental health training for the managers.

Ethical Reading then ran a HEW Strategic Planning workshop with DACHS Senior Management to create an 18 month to 2 year Embedding Plan via which to repetitively and frequently trigger, recognise, and reinforce the desired behaviours. This was refined with RBC's HR & OD team members

Ethical Reading also helped DACHS to develop targeted, sensitive, and easy to apply baseline and incremental surveys by means of which to track progress. These will highlight promptly any needed course corrections or other issues or change's that need to be made.

The training for all existing managers and staff has been completed and DACHS is now in the critically important embedding phase. This will be continued for new staff and promotions.

Seona and her team are confident that the next 18 months to 2 years will ensure that DACHS is a leader in Reading in offering a truly Healthy and Ethical Workplace to its employees and delivering the high quality of services that go with that.

"I am delighted with the way Ethical Reading have engaged with us to help design and implement the DACH's Energise programme. Results so far are very positive and we are now working to build on this by reinforcing and embedding positive behaviours throughout the department." **Seona Douglas, Executive Director, DACHS**

It's been very refreshing working with Ethical Reading on this programme. Feedback has been extremely positive, the facilitation of the sessions has been excellent and well received. The programme has certainly made a difference to support us on our journey to become a Healthy Ethical Workplace. **Jo Lappin, Assistant Director – Safeguarding, Quality, Performance & Practice**