

NHS

100% Effective

100% Effective Case Study Lean Six Sigma and the NHS



Les Phipps



Harrogate and District Foundation Trust



Lean Six Sigma



Where It Began

For small businesses or departments in any organisation, it can feel almost impossible to keep up with the progress of larger peers. With far fewer resources to hand, any improvements that are made are done so at a relatively slow pace, forcing the department to slip even further behind.

This is something that Les Phipps, Blood Sciences Manager at NHS Harrogate and District Foundation Trust, was experiencing a few years ago. While the Blood Sciences Laboratory was well regarded among clients and peers, Les was concerned that they were being left behind by larger blood laboratories and departments that were developing rapidly.



Les Phipps, Blood Sciences Manager at NHS Harrogate and District Foundation Trust

But the department was determined to catch-up and turned to 100% Effective for help. As a previous delegate of 100% Effective, Les was already well acquainted with Business Improvement and knew that with the correct method for improvement, the department's goals were possible. Les' improvement method of choice was Lean Six Sigma.

While those trained in Lean Six Sigma are capable of implementing improvements alongside individuals with no formal Business Improvement training, Les realised the value of offering 100% Effective training to the whole team. He wanted the entire department to have a shared understanding of the method, vocabulary and overall goal, believing this would result in accelerated success. And he was right.



The fact that we've all been through the same, or very similar training, means we understand each other [...] Progress can be far more instant than it would be if you constantly have to explain to people what you are doing and why.

Achievements So Far

We visited Les and the department 18 months after their training to see first-hand the progress made so far. With several successful projects completed, the department was already benefitting from some major achievements, many of which were visible as soon as we entered the laboratory itself.

The old laboratory (right) was, as Les described it, like a slalom course. This layout was causing several issues, most prominently the unnecessary waste of staff time as they transported specimens from one area of the laboratory to another. To eliminate this waste, the team changed the layout of the laboratory. They also removed unnecessary steps from processes altogether and introduced automated systems into the machinery. These improvements immediately released valuable staff time, allowing them to complete work specific to their role and expertise.



An area of the laboratory before the team implemented their improvement initiatives



"[Now staff] can get on with doing their more technical and clinical tasks rather than actually carrying things around. [This] now means that we have such efficient processes, and so much more capacity, that we can deal with the increase in workload seamlessly."

While improvements such as the change in layout have little to no cost implications, the team did make some financial investments into improvements. Most notably, the department replaced two thirds of their equipment with new, cutting-edge machinery. This update has already resulted in both time and

financial savings, as the old equipment was slow, inefficient, and often required repairs. The new machines are reliant and resilient, minimising downtime to almost zero.

The benefits achieved from the updated machines were of such a level that the team made immediate plans to completely

replace the remaining old machines within the next year. But beyond the financial improvements the new machinery achieved, it was the human element that Les said was the main motivation:

"One of the best ways that we can show we're investing in the department or service [...] is to give them cutting-edge equipment [...] By doing that, they realise that we are serious about improving the service we offer and improving their working lives."

Breaking Down the Benefits

Overall, the turnaround time of the department's procedures has decreased and Les believes that with fine tuning, this will continue drop even further. Although a few minor projects were lost along the way, the successful improvement projects have already resulted in big benefits, with predicted savings of around half a million each year.

When asked to identify which area of the department had benefited from the projects the most, Les told us that the gains had been felt in all areas of the department. To clarify this, he broke down the department into three categories; financial, staff benefits, and benefits of service to clients.



Saving half a million per year



Increase in staff satisfaction



Improved user experience

"[T]he projects have delivered in at least one [of these areas], and some of them have delivered benefits in all three of those areas. So, our users are seeing a more efficient service, our staff are actually happier with the process as it is at the moment, and it is [...] being operated in a more financially efficient way."

Of course, Les could have used his prior Lean Six Sigma training to implement the improvements himself, turning to our lifetime support to help him through the process. However, his choice to offer Lean Six Sigma training across the department certainly saw an increase in the pace at which the projects have been completed and the incredible levels of success they have seen.

Les described this choice to train with us and to seek our support implementing the Lean Six Sigma as an investment.

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"The insurance policy that we paid for with the training upfront means that everything we want to deliver from now on is going to be far smoother than it would have been."

When asked specifically about the department's experience with 100% Effective, Les had this to say:

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"Having a friendly voice with an expert opinion [...] to support and encourage and mentor you through the process is very beneficial - all the candidates mention it."

With our lifetime support guarantee, our 100% Effective expertise will be available for Les and his department whenever they need it. Whether it's to refresh their familiarity with a Lean Six Sigma tool or to request guidance on a new project, we will be there to support their success today, tomorrow, or in twenty years' time.



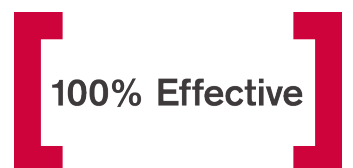
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