Co-creating & Implementing a Reasonable Adjustments Framework in an acute hospital trust

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In the UK the Equality Act 2010 outlines that statutory services have a legal duty to make anticipatory reasonable adjustments for people with (learning) disabilities; however, reasonable adjustments are not clearly defined or adequately implemented in clinical practice.

Practice development methodologies such as fourth generation evaluation (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) and thematic analysis, were employed to engage frontline staff in an exploratory conversation as to what reasonable adjustments might mean in the ward and hospital context. A framework was created to enable others to make adjustments.

The 4C framework (Marsden & Giles, 2017, Figure 1) was co-created with Hospital based healthcare professionals, identifying four themes for making reasonable adjustments: Communication, Choice Making, Collaboration and Coordination.

A suite of tools and resources including a Hospital Communication Book and My Healthcare Passport enable staff to choose the personalised adjustments required. This framework has also provided a basis for a training needs analysis and schedule, communication with patients and the public, and an audit tool was created to offer an indication of this culture change.

In preparation for NHS England’s LeDeR National Mortality Review, the NHS Trust arranged a precursor mortality case notes review. This employed three evidence based assessment tools, including an adapted form of the reasonable adjustments audit tool. This indicated a 53% application of locally agreed reasonable adjustments, see figure 2.

Employing practice development methodologies has supported frontline healthcare professionals to establish and advocate for a framework for making reasonable adjustments in practice. The resulting 4C Framework has provided the basis for quality improvement and communication methods across organisation, and the use of the Audit tool offers some indication as to penetration of the work into the organisational and practice culture.

References