

CASE STUDY

NHS WALES PRIMARY CARE SERVICES CONTINUE STRONG CUSTOMER FOCUS WITH CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATION

ISSUED – APRIL 2017

The NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) is an independent organisation created under directions from the Welsh Government as part of NHS Wales. Primary Care Services (PCS) are a division of NWSSP providing transactional and administrative services to primary care contractors on behalf of health boards and the Welsh Government.

Nicola Phillips, Head of Engagement & Support Services at the NWSSP, was keen to ensure that PCS were measuring and evidencing their customer service, making sure that the final customer, the patient, was receiving the best service possible. "The opportunity to encourage the organisation to monitor, review and refine our processes was a key reason behind us seeking Customer Service Excellence certification," says Nicola. "We wanted to demonstrate our continuous service improvements, as well as our commitment to making our culture customer focused."

WHAT IS CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE?

Customer Service Excellence (CSE) is a management standard that has been developed by the UK Government to



Di Smith, SGS CSE Assessor, presenting the CSE certificate to Dave Hopkins, Director of Primary Care Services

help organisations focus on customer-focused change. Certification from SGS United Kingdom Ltd can be instrumental in helping to drive a customer-centric culture within your organisation, within budget limitations, whilst also acting as an independent validation of your achievement.

Implementing CSE enables organisations to look at what they do and how their services impact on their customers, both internal and external. The process engages all stakeholders on a journey of improvement which then becomes embedded in people's day-to-day activity. Organisations use CSE to better understand their customers and develop action plans to deliver better and constantly 'in-touch' services. Other benefits include:

- Improved customer satisfaction
- Better service delivery planning for the future – as you know your customers better

- Increased return on investment – processes are 'right first time'
- An engaged and proud team

CREATING A CULTURE OF OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

For PCS, Customer Service Excellence was more than just a box-ticking exercise, and instead has acted as the catalyst for ingraining a 'customer first' mentality. Staff culture has been a major element to PCS' success and, as Nicola explains, getting this right has been a key achievement.

"We have worked hard to develop a culture of openness and transparency," says Nicola. "This allows for a safe environment where staff have a voice and are encouraged to take measured risk whilst developing innovative and efficient practices, processes and solutions."

"This has led to an environment where quality and continuous improvement are now part of our everyday thinking," continues Nicola. "This is evidenced by our achievements, including 'Most Improved Organisation' awarded by the Wales Quality Centre, for two years running."



Dave Hopkins and Nicola Phillips accepting their CSE certificate from SGS on behalf of PCS, NWSSP

SGS



Di Smith, CSE Assessor for SGS, was keen to praise the 'whole team approach' of PCS. "At a time of major change including budgetary challenges, restructures and having multiple site locations across Wales," says Di, "the leadership team have used the standard to really engage with colleagues and customers and manage change positively."

"The result," Di summarises, "is that the culture of Customer Service Excellence is embedded and evident at every level of the organisation."

WORKING WITH SGS

"We chose to work with SGS due to it being recognised as a global leader in inspection, assessment and certification services," explains Nicola. "The audits have been informative and thought provoking", continues Nicola, "as the assessors have the ability to enthuse and encourage during the audit which in itself acts as a catalyst for innovation and creative thinking."

"It has been a pleasure to work with SGS; the support and guidance they have provided year on year has enabled PCS to continue to consolidate its position and to provide an enhanced level of customer service in a variety of the standards criteria."

This sentiment is one mirrored by Di Smith. "It was seamless. The NHS Wales team were all fully engaged in the process and proud to be part of the assessment."

Everyone I met was aware of the positive impact holding the standard has had on their organisation. The whole team shared the aspiration to retain it and use any outcomes to continue to improve and keep services contemporary."

CERTIFICATION AND BEYOND

"CSE certification has instigated a drive at all levels within PCS to ensure delivery of high quality services, a focus on best practice and collaborative working relationships," explains Nicola.

"Staff engagement has increased along with the appetite to get involved. This involvement motivates and encourages staff at all levels. Staff feel they have a voice and make a valuable contribution to the organisation's goals and improving the customer experience."

Staff are more aware of customer requirements and how their role directly impacts on the overall customer journey and importantly, the indirect impact that PCS have on providing world class patient care (the final customer in the chain).

"Looking forward", continues Nicola, "our drive is to move to a compliance plus arena whilst on our world class journey, building on the certification to demonstrate that PCS are exceeding our customer expectations."

"We will continue to celebrate success and showcase best practice and innovation whilst sharing experiences good and bad with all stakeholders in order to learn, develop and grow," says Nicola.

ADVICE TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS CONSIDERING CSE CERTIFICATION

"Go for it, but plan ahead," says Nicola. "Monitor, review and refine. Embed these principles into everyday organisational activities and the rest follows its course in developing a continuous improvement culture."

"Take advantage of the 'pre-assessment' stage," continues Nicola. "This gives the organisation the opportunity to establish the readiness of the service prior to the formal review, ensuring you focus efforts on key areas of improvement and engagement."

"CSE enables an organisation to identify areas for service improvement, whilst recognising and celebrating success and best practice throughout their journey."

For more information, call the Business Enhancement team on 0800 900 094, or email uk.nowisthetime@sgs.com.