INVESTORS IN PEOPLE REPORT

Premier Care (Plymouth) Ltd

Presented by Liz Kingdom

Investors in People Practitioner

On behalf of Investors in People South of England

14 December 2015

Project number: 14-05231

CONTENTS

Recommendation and next steps

Having carried out the assessment process in accordance with the guidelines provided for Investors in People Practitioner by Investors in People – United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills, the Investors in People Practitioner is totally satisfied that Premier Care (Plymouth) Ltd meets the requirements of the Investors in People National Standard.

Investors in People accreditation is granted indefinitely, with a proviso that an interaction is undertaken within 18 months of accreditation and a full assessment takes place no greater than 3 years apart. Assessments can be undertaken at any time and more frequent assessments are recommended to maintain levels of good practice and continuous improvement.

The organisation should discuss the timing of the next assessment with their Investors in People Practitioner, using the Improvement Planning Meeting to agree the best strategy for future use of the Investors in People framework.

Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire

Both the Investors in People Practitioner and Investors in People South of England would welcome your feedback on this assessment and you will shortly be supplied with a Client Satisfaction Questionnaire from Investors in People to complete. Particular importance is placed on the feedback given by client organisation's on Practitioner's, therefore we would very much appreciate it if you would complete the questionnaire.

Promoting Continuous Improvement

We support organisations at every stage of the Investors in People journey, helping them to realise the power of their people, optimise their performance and achieve their full potential.   We see Investors in People as the People Partner for sustainable people solutions.

Please contact your Account Manager Veronica Parsons on 0207 728 3456   or email **veronica.parsons@iipsouth.investorsinpeople.co.uk** to find out more about Investors in People and how we can help your organisation.

Details of the support available to you can be accessed by contacting Investors in People South of England via: -

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Summary

As during the last review in 2012 I was impressed with the level of commitment of your staff to delivering a high quality of care to service users. Throughout my meetings with them they regularly referred to how the service users were at the heart of everything they do. This value which I know is central to your ethos has clearly become embedded across your organisation.

You have also had to be flexible and adapt to significant changes in the external environment both in terms of commissioning but also in relation to the training and development of care and support workers.

You continue to deliver high quality training and development for all your team. People valued this highly and it was evident that their confidence and skills are raised as a result of the various development activities you offer. This was not only relating to support worker training but also in terms of the management development you have undertaken.

You are very aware of the challenges for your team in working with highly complex service users, something that is compounded by the fact that many of them are lone workers undertaking their work on a 1-1 basis with a service user.

I would like to thank Martin for arranging the two days of interviews – this is no mean feat with most of your team out and about at the various projects but it all worked well and I was able to meet with a good range of people from different areas of your organisation. I would also of course like to thank all of those that I met – they were willing to give their time and their views freely.

The additional six indicators which were reviewed were incorrectly noted in the planning matrix – they should have been related to learning and development as discussed since this is an area to which you devote considerable resource and commitment. It was therefore considered that this would be a useful area to explore in a little more depth.

Incidentally it was clear how very seriously people take confidentiality for their service users. Without exception no one mentioned any of their service users by name and made clear that respect and consideration for their service users is paramount.

Feedback related to the Investors in People Themes

The following section provides feedback on specific themes related to the Investors in People Standard.

Business Strategy (Indicator 1)

Your business plan has not changed significantly since the last review. It remains a simple and clear document which sets the care and support for service users at the heart of everything you do. The objectives you have in support of this aim are straightforward and make it clear to everyone what you as an organisation plan to do to meet these and also, usefully, what people are expected to do to support their achievement.

The plan is well communicated to everyone as part of the induction process and people have a good understanding of what they are expected to achieve and how they are expected to work. As mentioned in the summary the fact that everyone talked about the focus on service-user well-being and indicates that this message it getting across loud and clear.

"We always try to help improve the lives of our service users"

People are very clear about what they are expected to achieve – for support workers most of this relates to ensuring that the service users they work with are able to have fulfilled and satisfying lives. People talked very enthusiastically about the satisfaction they gained from seeing their service users' progress and how they were able to contribute to improvements, even if just 'little steps' in the service users' day-to-day lives. People gave examples of this in practice and were clearly proud of their involvement in making this happen.

"I was so pleased when x (service user) started to communicate with people outside his home – it felt like our hard work had paid off""

Performance objectives are based around maintaining existing contracts and gaining new contracts when they are available. Your recent company briefing was a good opportunity for you to share these with everyone so that they knew about potential developments and areas of work.   I understand that you have, or will shortly be doing, a summary of the key points from the company briefing to circulate to those who were unable to attend and also to act as a reminder for those who were present.

Learning and Development (Indicators 2 and 8)

You have a very clear understanding of the learning and development needs of Premier Care and have a well-established process for delivering both induction and on-going training. This is to some extent now driven by the requirements of the fairly recently introduced Care Certificate for support workers.

Part of the team leader role is to ensure that members of their respective teams have any training needs met. Learning is discussed during quarterly supervisions and the annual appraisal. Specific learning

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related to service user needs can be identified during these meetings and I was not aware of anyone having requested training that was not subsequently made available.

Almost without exception everyone I spoke with was very positive about the way in which learning was delivered and how much importance was placed on development activities.

People talked about different approaches to suit different needs e.g. providing paper-based activities for those who did not have access to or were not confident in doing this on-line. There were also instances of

> *"I feel they're really on top of training – you don't have to ask, it's an accepted part of what we do"*

people being given a laptop for a period of time in order to complete activities at home if that was their preference. Where appropriate, learning was delivered through the medium of videos enabling people to pause when necessary to clarify points.

The induction process which you have in place appears to be very effective. People I talked with who are relatively new to Premier Care described how the induction was comprehensive and well-paced. Although there is a lot of information for people to assimilate in general people did not feel overloaded with detail. They also valued the shadow shifts which enabled them to work alongside an experienced member of the team until they felt confident to work alone.

> *"I was pleased they took the induction so seriously – it was lengthy but really prepared you"*

There was an instance mentioned when a team member with only a few weeks experience was assigned someone to shadow them. It was also mentioned that on occasion a member of the team who expected to be shadowing has been asked to work the shift. I know you are aware of this

and that it is your intention that this should not occur.

People are encouraged to learn from each other and there would appear to be much informal learning that goes on within projects – with team members learning from each other how to relate and respond to individual service users. People were keen to share their strategies so that service users were comfortable and confident with their support workers. Team leaders also play an important role in ensuring that learning is a positive experience day-to-day. This is particularly important given that so many of your support workers are working solo for much of the time.

Many of your development activities involve everyone in a particular job role as there are many mandatory requirements for initial training and up-dating e.g. health and safety, safeguarding etc. A training matrix is maintained in your office which clearly identifies who requires up-dating and the necessary training is then made available.

People talked very positively about the autism training and were able to give a range of examples to demonstrate how this had helped them to understand and respond to individual service users.   Other training needs and/or personal development opportunities are discussed during supervisions and are brought together during the annual appraisal enabling you to identify organisational needs alongside those of individual members of the team.

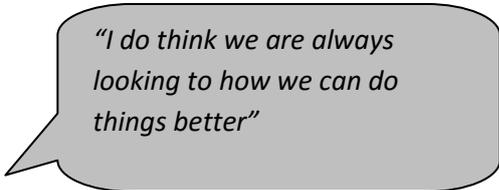People Management Strategy (Indicator 3)

Team meetings and company briefings are opportunities provided for people to contribute ideas. As most people work in very small teams ideas tend to emerge naturally from the day-to-day work of the teams in the various projects. People felt that in general team leaders were open to new ideas – often this would be related to how to relate with a particular service user or how to manage the day to ensure that a service user got the most out of it.

You conduct a survey of staff (along with service users and their families) and a number of people mentioned having completed the questionnaire. I understand that the results have been fed back in a variety of ways – i.e. through your newsletter and website but it was disappointing to learn that some people did not appear to be aware of the efforts you had made. This is a pity given the importance you place on seeking peoples' views and also the importance in giving feedback so that people know their views have been listened to and, where appropriate, acted upon.

Access to support and opportunities to learn and develop are open to everyone. I gained a sense from those I spoke to that everyone was able to progress if they showed a desire to learn and that there were opportunities for career development within Premier Care for people to aspire to. There were certainly examples of people who had moved from support worker roles to team leader with others moving into more senior management positions within your company.

"I do think we are always looking to how we can do things better"

Leadership and Management Strategy and Effectiveness (Indicators 4 and 5)

As you have grown as an organisation and experienced a reduction in your senior management team you have recognised that the systems and processes which worked well when you were a smaller enterprise are not necessarily the right ones to take you forward into a larger and inevitably more complex organisation. You have identified that teams could become more self-managing thereby giving people greater autonomy both leading and within teams and freeing up the time of senior managers for more strategic work.

Whilst some team leaders and their teams see this as a very positive move others are somewhat more reluctant to embrace this change in culture. I know that you see this as a long-term change which will not happen instantly. However once people see they will be supported and have the autonomy to make considered decisions they will no doubt begin to see the benefits of greater self-management – building their confidence in their decision-making will also help them to feel they are able to take on these additional responsibilities.

The senior team are clear about the skills required of leaders and managers – the recent in-house management training was focussed on these skills and people were able to describe how these work in practice. The recent management training is helping to embed a shared understanding across the management team including team leaders and a second group to undertake the training early in 2016 will continue to establish this further.   Key management skills which people spoke about included supporting, coaching, being accessible and fair.
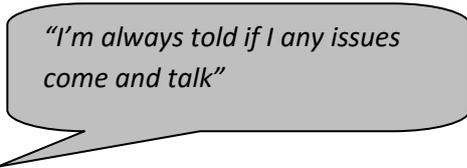
"I'm always told if I any issues come and talk"

Whilst most people talked about a genuine open door policy there were some concerns expressed that people were not always able to get a response from senior managers. This seems to be a case of managing expectations and also establishing the greater delegation of responsibility to team leaders. Most of the instances that were related to me appeared to arise as people were contacting senior managers for issues which are now expected to be dealt with locally within projects. This is perhaps a reflection of a concern among people that as your organisation grows they will potentially grow further apart from the senior team as I know from the last assessment that this 'closeness' or accessibility was something which people valued highly. Simple things such as ensuring that as part of the induction every new member of the team meets senior managers – perhaps having coffee during the office-based induction – could help to alleviate these concerns. I know from talking with the senior team that you are keen not to operate as a 'corporate' and these personal touches could help support this objective.

People generally understood what their manager and/or team leader should be doing in terms of leading, managing and developing them. People particularly talked about support and accessibility. Although by no means widespread there were some concerns expressed that the senior office-based team were less accessible than in the past.   This is perhaps not surprising given your drive to delegate responsibilities to team leader level but could be the consequence of people not yet fully understanding the implications of this and what it means in terms of who they should go to with specific queries.

"I've never had such good rapport with managers as I do here"

Although the role of team leader has become established over the past three years how it works on a day-to-day basis does vary across your organisation with some team leaders embracing the opportunity to take on additional responsibilities and others feeling less positive. Some feel their workload is increasing whilst others do not feel confident to take on sometimes difficult conversations with members of their team.

Whilst team meetings do happen they are more regular in some areas than others. It could be helpful to have an agreed requirement for frequency of meetings as far as possible and a basic agenda which can be flexed by team leaders to meet their specific needs.

Team leader meetings will be particularly helpful following the second round of management training so that the implications of this can be discussed in terms of how people put their learning into practice. It could also help for people to share good practice and ideas between team leaders so that they can learn from the experience of one another.

There also seems to be some lack of understanding in certain teams about how to deal with issues if a team leader is moved to a different project. People were uncertain if they should go to that team leader with queries and this could be resulting in more calls to the office than necessary.

"I always feel supported by my manager – I know I can raise any issues I need to"

People valued the feedback they received during supervisions and their annual appraisal. Often issues would be dealt with as and when they arose on shift but people also appreciated the time to be able to sit down one-to-one with their team leader for supervisions and for the annual appraisal.

Recognition and Reward (Indicator 6)

When talking with people about how their contribution is recognised many related this back to their service users. Many made reference to the satisfaction they gain by seeing their service users progress and gain confidence to undertake activities.

Many people spoke of the regular thanks they receive from team leaders for their efforts as well as from colleagues within their teams. In addition some people talked about how they felt recognised when they were asked to offer shadowing opportunities. People felt this demonstrated that they were trusted and valued and that their experience and skills were being recognised.

The level of, and commitment to, training and development was also mentioned by people as another way in which they felt rewarded – having the opportunity to develop skills which not only support them in their current role but also providing possibilities for progression if they are seeking this.

Someone also suggested that a 'star employee of the month' or similar recognition could perhaps add to how people feel valued. This might be something for you to consider if you feel it would add another dimension to how people feel appreciated and recognised.

Another idea you might want to consider which I have seen working successfully in other organisations is 'Managing Director for a Day' – asking people as part of your survey or separately what key thing they would do if they were MD for the day. Whilst you will inevitably get many suggestions which are not possible to implement you are also likely to get a handful that could be introduced and could contribute to improvements. Asking the question also acts as a hook for getting feedback from people on where they see improvements could be made. The responses can also act as the start of a dialogue enabling you to feedback and clarify areas where there are mis-understandings.

Involvement and Empowerment (Indicator 7)

Regular meetings at project team level ensure that people are involved in developing plans within their own areas of work. People were able to give a range of examples of how their ideas were encouraged and acted on.

The company briefings are also an opportunity for the wider staff team to get together. It is disappointing that more people don't attend the full staff meetings – this is not an unusual problem in organisations such as yours but it is unfortunate that an opportunity to get together and share information and ideas may be lost for some members of the team.

The survey you undertake includes not only the staff team but also service users and families. I understand that the results of the survey and, where appropriate, what is happening about issues raised is highlighted in your newsletter and website. However it was evident from the comments of some of those I interviewed that they were not clear about how feedback was communicated. It was disappointing that as a result of this perception some people had not completed the survey as they did not feel there was any follow-up.

There was evidence of a good team ethos in most projects with people working closely with colleagues and feeling that they gained support from one another and their team

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"My team leader is brilliant – always listens to ideas. I genuinely feel I've got a voice"

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leader. I am sure you will be able to use the particular good practice in place and model this across all projects so that all team leaders are able to develop the excellent practice that is already evident.

One area which seems to be creating some confusion is the rationale for the way in which rotas are put together. Clearly these are very complex to manage and there are many variables which result in changing having to be made at short notice e.g. sickness absence. However some of the people I talked with did not appear to be aware of why things were done in the way they were. I think that your idea of enabling team leaders to do their own rotas will go some way towards addressing these issues.

The requirement for mobile contracts whereby people can be moved from one project to another at short notice is perfectly understandable given the complexities of maintaining cover and there were people who relished the opportunity to learn by working with different service users. However others found it very difficult to change at short notice. Whilst I understand that your idea of a staff representative has not really taken off there could be scope around the issue of rotas to involve a working group of people including a number of support workers. In this way they will be able to have their say but also gain experience and understanding of how rotas are put together and the many challenges that these pose.

Performance Management and Continuous Improvement (Indicators 9 and 10)

You have a very clear understanding of the amount of resource that you devote to learning and development. With a centrally held training plan you are able to track the cost in terms of money and time that is spent.

Everyone at all levels in the organisation was able to give examples of ways in which learning and development has improved performance. In particular activities to support work with individual service users were mentioned – especially courses relating to specific medical conditions that need to be managed. Equally important for many people was the day-to-day learning that takes place on projects with team members sharing strategies and developing ways of working which suit individual service users.

I am aware that you regularly review and evaluate how your strategies are working. Developing in-house expertise to enable you to deliver bespoke learning activities which can be set firmly in the context of Premier Care's day-to-day working has proved successful and I understand you are developing this further.

The cultural change you are bringing about with self-managing teams is beginning to support continuous improvement although inevitably some people are moving more quickly than others in this direction. It was also mentioned that you are encouraging managers to provide positive feedback to their team on a more regular basis. Return to work processes are also being changed to support people more effectively after they have been off whether for a short or longer period of time.

Summary of Suggestions for Further Development

The following is a summary of the suggestions contained throughout this report.

- Look at ways to ensure feedback on surveys and other consultations reaches people – having this as an item at team meetings might be one way to do this

- Consider ways in which you can ensure that people understand the rationale behind the rota system (this is already beginning with the plans for teams to manage their own rotas)

- Clarify the evolving role and responsibilities of team leader and what this means for the way people work and relate to the senior team

- Establish expectations for the regularly of team meetings to take place

- Agree a format for the Agenda which can be flexed for individual project needs

- Remind people of the communication channels as despite these being in place there were a significant number of people who did not seem to make good use of them

- Provide moderation opportunities for team leaders relating to the care certificate assessments

- Consider developing small working groups to work on specific projects incorporating the staff representative concept

- Finally, as I mentioned to you the Sixth Generation Framework for Investors in People has been launched and organisations will be assessed against this for reviews from March 2016. We agreed that I would provide you with further information on this at the improvement planning meeting on 12 January 2016.

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Appendix A : Outcomes table - evidence requirements framework matrix

Core Standard

Total number of core evidence requirements assessed - 37
Total number of core evidence requirements met - 37

ERs	Indicators									
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	✓	✓	✓	░	✓	░	░	░	✓	░
5	n/a	░	✓	░	░	░	░	░	✓	░
6	✓	░	░	░	░	░	░	░	░	░

Wider Framework

Total number of additional evidence requirements assessed - 6
Total number of additional evidence requirements met - 6

ERs	Indicators									
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
4	Core	Core	Core		Core				Core	
5	Core	✓	Core						Core	
6	Core									
7										
8										
9		✓								
10		✓								
11										
12										
13		✓								
14		✓		░						
15		✓		░					░	
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28	░			░		░				
29	░			░		░				