

8 giveaway signs of badly written slacktation plans!

Emphasis on conducting a re-audit: let's be honest we have all seen this issue where the main and sometimes only action is to re-audit care. The action plan should provide a step-by-step account of what actions need to be carried out. The re-audit is a given, not an action!

1



No clear author: action plans are key documents that need to inspire activity. Sadly all too often authors of action plans remain anonymous. The best action plans are always formulated, agreed and owned by key stakeholders and those who understand the area of care requiring improvement.

2



The end goal is not clearly conveyed: in many respects an action plan should be seen as a roadmap to achieving a particular goal. There should be clearly defined steps that lead us towards that goal... but the overall goal must be precise, understandable and obvious to all stakeholders!

3



SLACK not SMART: we've heard it a million times: SMART = Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. These are the building blocks for all good action plans. Slack action plans, tell us the responsibility for change is 'all', the action must be completed by 'the end of Spring'... oh dear!

4



Are blind to the key concerns: audits like patient safety investigations often highlight a number of problems that need to be remedied. Of course, it is often easier to solve the less complex problems, but this is a common mistake. Good audit action plans diagnose the root cause and start with that!

5



Use weak language and adopt weaker changes: action plans need to be precise and concise. 'Should' and 'could' are optional, 'MUST' is not. 'Try harder', 'be more diligent', 'raise awareness', blah, blah, blah. Focus actions on what we know is best practice and be imaginative when designing changes.

6



Disappear without trace: slacktation plans hide in large reports and drawers, often never to be seen again. Key actions are not shared, nor regularly monitored. The action plan is viewed as the end point, not the beginning. No one is given lead responsibility or accountability for the plan = FAIL.

7



Are often part of a wider problem where organisations: 1) don't use one centrally agreed action plan template, 2) don't audit their action plans to identify strengths and weaknesses, 3) don't train staff in how to write effective plans and 4) don't share exemplar action plans with those tasked to write them.

8

