



Implementation of EFQM-System

Quality Management in the Sozial-Holding der Stadt Mönchengladbach GmbH¹

The health care and social services sector is in no way inferior to the commercial industry in its awareness of quality. Great expertise, a respective staffing and the necessary infrastructures are essential for the health care and social professions and they are demanded by the legislator and the financing bodies. The Sozial-Holding der Stadt Mönchengladbach GmbH has faced the high demands and it has documented its maximum performance and improvement potential in a 'Qualitätsbericht Altenheime'². In times of scarce public means, growing social sensitiveness in the handling of the topic old age as well as increasing demands to quality and professionalism of social services the report provides an important contribution to the transparency in the health care and social services sector. Potential consulting oriented on the EFQM model, the model of the European Foundation for Quality Management, had been carried out beforehand. KCR-Konkret Consult Ruhr in the Wissenschaftspark³ Gelsenkirchen were responsible for the potential consulting. Consultant Roland Weigel: "The EFQM is a very suitable monitoring system for the systematic investigation of a company over a limited

period, which conforms to the core of potential consulting. At first we need to elaborate the strengths of the company in order to then look for ways of improvement. Only companies that can establish quality are able to stabilise jobs and create new ones." The potential consulting also showed that the employees as job experts should have a say when you want to achieve the safeguarding of employability, quality of work and work satisfaction.

Requirements of a Quality Management System

The Altenheime der Stadt Mönchengladbach GmbH⁴ is an affiliate of the Sozial-Holding der Stadt Mönchengladbach GmbH. 580 old people live there, looked after by about as many nursing or housekeeping staff. The GmbH originated from the Amt für Altenhilfe⁵ aimed at facilitating the organisation of the most important social action fields fast, flexibly and unbureaucratically. Together with its affiliates the Sozial-Holding der Stadt Mönchengladbach GmbH offers a broad spectre of social services with an emphasis on the care for the elderly. Thus it has succeeded in maintaining the essential modules of community and inpatient care in an internal network beginning with the training for geriatric nurses and it has reacted to the individual demands of the customers.

¹ Social Holding of the City of Mönchengladbach Ltd.

² Quality Report Nursing Homes

³ Sciences Park

⁴ Nursing Homes of the city of Mönchengladbach Ltd.]

⁵ Municipal Department for the Care of the Elderly



The GmbH pursues a comprehensive quality policy committed to the total quality management approach, seeing quality development as a cycle, which has to be gone through again and again. “Modern quality management”, Helmut Wallrafen-Dreisow, board member of the Sozial-Holding, explains “has to be systematic, evidence-based, dynamic and verifiable. The Altenheime der Stadt Mönchengladbach GmbH thus follow the approach of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). The people responsible have picked the EFQM model, because it is a process-oriented quality model that involves all parts of an organisation in the development and quality assurance.”

The EFQM Model

The EFQM model consists of a total of nine criteria for the evaluation of quality, itemised into two areas: the enablers and the results criteria. The enablers criteria are concerned with those aspects of the organisation that deal with performance, behaviour and practice. By the specification of five individual criteria – leadership, policy and strategy, people partnerships and resources, processes – attention is drawn to how an organisation makes sure to be able to achieve excellent results in some parts or even all of its organisation. The results criteria are different. Among them are customer-, employee-, society related results and key results (those are economic factors, but also – in the area of nursing homes – central events like the admittance of new residents). The question is now what results can be achieved on the basis of the specified enablers crite-

ria. For this you need special assessment criteria (cp.: Helmut Wallrafen-Dreisow/Roland Weigel, ed.: EFQM in Einrichtungen der Altenhilfe. Messen, bewerten, besser werden, Stuttgart 2004⁶).

More Transparency and Comparability: the Quality Report

The quality report of the Altenheime der Stadt Mönchengladbach GmbH is such a systematic description of the organisation and quality of the entire company structured according to the EFQM model. It is itemized according to the most important performances, structures, processes and results of a nursing home’s organisation or its institutions. By the disclosure of the most important success factors quality reports can form the basis for the conclusion of performance and quality agreements with the cost bearers or even substitute them in the future. Beside transparency the quality report also promotes the comparability of the institutions. In some regions the users of the EFQM model have already pooled to benchmarking circles and are actively exchanging their experience as well as results of quality management. Structures, processes and many results in institutions for the care of the elderly can be compared along the structure of the nine criteria of the EFQM model. Customers and employees can look up the results in the quality report, cost bearers are provided with statements that can be checked in terms of a performance and quality evidence.

⁶ EFQM in Institutions for the Care of the Elderly. Assess, Evaluate, Improve, Stuttgart 2004



An Example: Employability – Knowledge and Competence of the Staff

The complexity of quality management and of the quality report is illustrated by an example from the area 'Knowledge and Competence of the Staff', an example from the enablers criterion 'staff' and the results criterion 'staff-related results'.

"The expertise of the employees", manager Helmut Wallrafen-Dreisow explains, "is of elementary importance for the quality of the performance. The targeted assignment of employees depends on the expertise and social abilities of each individual. Therefore it is important that the direct superiors know the competencies of their employees well and that they are developed systematically."

For this purpose the Altenheime der Stadt Mönchengladbach GmbH has a comprehensive concept. Every year a new catalogue is issued with the in-house training programmes (IBF) for the following year and distributed among the employees. The employees are also provided with information on external training programmes. "We want our employees to participate in these training programmes and encourage them to do so", the manager says, "because qualified work with and for people requires a maximum of professionalism and quality." Nearly all employees, even the semi-skilled and unskilled, participate. But not all events of the IBF are voluntary. To ensure the expertise of employees regular refresher courses are compulsory in many areas like for instance first aid and emergency skills.

Not least because of the current labour market situation the GmbH promotes the qualifying of semi-skilled and unskilled employees by recognised training or vocational programmes and so strengthens their employability. Two years ago 100 of them were offered to attend a 112-hour nursing course with certificate. Financially this meant an improvement of their jobs by €320 gross. 72 employees accepted this offer. Additionally all employees were given the opportunity to learn the nursing profession. Of the 277 people in question only eight took advantage of this offer – the reason for that was the large amount of time involved for the training. As the GmbH, according to manager Wallrafen-Dreisow, "wants to do something about the poor recognition of age, also by employees, at an early stage in the face of employees becoming older in Germany", the vocational in-service training as a state-certified housekeeper is open to all interested employees independent of their age. More than half of the 17 participants are older than 45 years and seven of them are considerably older than fifty.

According to the keyword 'lifelong learning and constant changes' the employees are continuously being challenged, for instance in the context of the IT-nursing documentation. In order to be able to offer more learning possibilities beyond the classic seminars, the management has decided to establish skill-labs in co-operation with the personnel department. They are a voluntary, individual and thematic qualifying offer, where you can get help from qualified people if wished. Topical technical literature is available, the respective magazines are distributed by

the supervisors and initialled by the employees. Last a not unimportant qualifying offer: in order for the employees to better understand the work according to the EFQM model and to make use of it for their work, more than 50 of them have trained as TQM assessors and some of those again as process facilitators and project managers.

Quality Improvement: A Constant Process

There is no question about it: the variety and intensity of the training activities of the GmbH are exemplary. No question? The consultants Roland Weigel and manager Helmut Wallrafen-Dreisow were not that easily satisfied. For them the review of the situation was only the basis for further action, because the EFQM model sees quality development as a cycle which has to be gone through again and again.

The critical review of systematically recorded training activities by additional questioning among the employees was to gain new insights. The result: the increased expertise constitutes a plus in confidence of the employees and a better self-assessment of their technical quality. But: increased technical knowledge does not necessarily increase employee satisfaction, the quality managers were forced to conclude. But how can increased technical knowledge be reflected in lesser work satisfaction? Roland Weigel: "That has to do with expertise taking place primarily in the nursing area and that often means a very standardised course in documentation and planning. Employees experience that as a loss of time for the care of the residents – a classical effect of the bureaucratizing of workflow. To put it blandly they get the impression: we document better today than we work." But it is the immediate work with people that is of great relevance for the employees: Against widespread presumptions employee satisfaction in the nursing profession is much greater on the ground of intrinsic motivation than in many other sectors. The quality management experts took appropriate steps. This includes a new orientation of the training contents, a reorganisation of the interaction between the nursing staff and the social service and the house-keeping staff.

"The processes are in the foreground again", the consultant explained the further course of action, "the 'little things' in everyday life play a big role, for instance organising the bathing of the residents in a different way, not seeing it as a purely nursing operation under hygienic aspects but to provide a nice atmosphere with light, scents, a rubber duck or music and so satisfy the resident's need not only for good care but also for a nicer everyday life.

The increased quality of services is a necessity under economic and labour market policy aspects, too. Consultant Roland Weigel: "Most nursing homes are calculated on a 98% occupancy. Homes with image problems have demand problems and workplace problems. Some homes work with an occupancy of 95%. No institution can survive on that basis in the long run. Conclusion: Only quality can safeguard and increase workplaces." This was successful in Mönchengladbach: Two years ago the Sozial-Holding GmbH was validated by the EFQM as 'committed to excellence'. The Altenheim GmbH had already proven its innovation competence among others by the acquisition of the seal of approval 'Arbeit plus⁷', which the Evangelische Kirche Deutschland⁸ gives for excellent employment policy.

⁷ work plus

⁸ Evangelical Church in Germany

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