

CCP DRIVES IMPROVEMENTS IN VIRGIN TRAINS' TRAUMA CARE STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

Virgin Trains runs the West Coast rail franchise, serving 43 stations.

They operate 330 trains a day (Monday to Thursday) carrying 30 million passengers annually (in the year to February 2013), and employ 3093 staff, 520 of which are drivers. In 2012 the number of recorded fatalities on the line was around 20.

Virgin Trains has always been proactive at looking after their employees and historically offered trauma aftercare to drivers witnessing fatalities and other traumatic incidents as part of an Employee Assistance Programme.

However the service was basic, and not individualised, meaning it did not reflect the specific needs of each driver in the period immediately following the incident.

THE ISSUE

The approach to trauma care by the previous occupational health supplier created a number of problems and challenges for both the driver and Virgin Trains:

- The time lapse between the incident and contact with a counsellor was around 4 weeks. The lack of immediate response left the driver isolated and increased the opportunity for negative reflection and 'secondary trauma'
- This impacted greatly on the driver's family life, causing unnecessary distress and anxiety
- The driver was expected to make arrangements to visit a doctor, who could be situated miles from home and was unknown to the individual
- As a result of the lack of clear process drivers spent considerable time away from work without help and assistance
- Following fatalities the resulting driver absence was unhelpful to both the individual and the business as a whole
- There was no information provided to the Driver Manager, or the management team, to monitor progress of the individual, nor any on-going care plan

AND, for the majority of drivers the previous approach to trauma care simply did not work.

There was no clear evidence that even those who did engage with the general counselling sessions provided returned to work quicker, or felt a reduction in the psychological reactions to the incident.



THE CCP SOLUTION

CCP has worked with Virgin Trains for over 11 years and specifically with drivers following fatalities for nearly 2 years. Unlike generic trauma care and counselling service providers, CCP offers a bespoke approach, using a range of therapeutic techniques, which is highly directive and has a strong educative component.

- CCP provides trauma care based on the needs of the individual driver and not on the basis of 'one solution fits all'
- CCP makes direct contact with the driver between 48 and 72 hours following the incident, which allows time for the immediate shock to subside
- Prior to making contact, CCP will find out details about the incident to ensure the communication is as focused and personal as possible
- Critically, CCP visit the driver at a time and place most appropriate to them. This could be at their work place, their home or even a local meeting room
- CCP provides the Driver Manager and the local management team with regular progress reports and works closely on the formulation of an on-going care and return to work plan

THE RESULTS

CCP intervention has resulted in drivers coping better with the aftermath of traumatic incidents and provided the necessary stimulus to return them to the working environment in two to three days and back driving more quickly than before.

Virgin Trains has received very positive feedback from drivers who have worked with CCP, citing the fact that they are experts in their field as a major advantage. They also appreciate the opportunity of talking to a specialist third party, rather than a member of staff, or a generic counsellor.

Drivers have also acknowledged their appreciation that specialist trauma care is available to them, which reinforces Virgin Trains' reputation as an employer who values its staff.

THE FUTURE POTENTIAL

As part of the recruitment process and the induction briefing for new drivers, Virgin Trains now emphasises the availability of specialist trauma care provision as a major benefit of their employment.

Where previously occupational hazards were often ignored or avoided, Virgin Trains can tackle these in the confidence that a proven solution is in place.

The organisation is also conducting a set of courses with CCP to train staff as 'defusers', with a view to rolling this out as part of a management training programme. These courses have received very positive feedback.

CLIENT SUMMARY

Colin Barratt, Driver Depot Manager at Virgin Trains said:

'CCP has an excellent understanding of the requirements of each driver and the business needs of Virgin Trains, following a traumatic incident. Rather than waiting to be contacted they are hugely proactive and use over 25 years experience to ensure the response is effective. There is no doubt that since working with CCP we have a recognised process for dealing with the effects of post incident trauma which has enormous benefits for both the individual and the company as a whole.'

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW CCP CAN HELP YOUR PEOPLE, PROTECT YOUR BRAND REPUTATION AND ADD VALUE TO YOUR BUSINESS

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