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1. IDENTIFICATION

Title of the case:

Effective Improvement as a Result of CAF Self-Assessment in units for Child, Youth and Family Services (Bufetat), southern region.

Name of the organisation:

Regional Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufetat), Southern Norway

Name of the person in charge:

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Level:

Regional

Sector:

Administration – Social work

Background:

The main objective of the Regional Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufetat) is to provide services of high and accurate quality to children, young people and families in need of assistance and support regardless of their geographical location in Norway. The office carries out work within the areas of child welfare, family counselling, couples counselling, marriage guidance and adoption. The Regional Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufetat) Southern Norway provides services to five counties with a total population of around 900,000. Among the main tasks are the running of 16 children's, young people's and family centres, 6 response and consultation teams, 6 foster home services and 3 government family welfare offices. In addition the department has operating agreements with 7 church family welfare offices.

2. SUMMARY

Implementation of CAF as a quality model in the Regional Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufetat) Southern Norway is a project running from October 2005 to March 2009. The vision is that all our units will provide services of correct professional quality. The objective is to implement CAF in 90 % of the region's units before the end of 2008.

A pilot project was carried out in 2005/06. Against the background of experience gained on the pilot project an internal work and registration folder was developed (based on the EU's first revised CAF version, 2003) as well as a "CAF documentation folder". The implementation process was established and performed on the basis of experience gained on the pilot project and with the help of the developed material.

The results of the CAF assessments at the different units are the foundation for prioritising the areas for improvement. Each unit has developed an improvement protocol and action plan

with concrete targets, improvement measures, operating plan and description of the allocation of responsibilities.

On the basis of the results so far, the regional management has made the additional decision that the following two targets will apply to all the subordinate units:

- Develop and introduce systematic measurements of user satisfaction
- Develop and introduce systematic measurements of employee satisfaction

3. THE APPROACH

In cooperation with five different units in the region (three family and young people's centres, one family welfare office and one response and consultation team), during the period 2006/07 a CAF pilot project was carried out. In parallel with the implementation of the CAF model in these units an evaluation was carried out to ascertain whether CAF was a quality assurance tool for child welfare institutions and family counselling offices. The intention was:

- To evaluate CAF as a quality assurance tool for the office
- Adapt and simplify the EU's first revised CAF version (2003), for child welfare and family counselling activities
- Prepare an 'individual working and registration booklet' and a 'CAF documentation file'

After the pilot project it was decided that CAF should be implemented in all units of the Offices for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufetat). The implementation period will be up to the end of 2008.

The following factors were taken into consideration before the implementation:

- All units shall carry out annual internal CAF based evaluations
- Through active participation in the processes, all employees shall have an increased quality understanding and greater knowledge of their own operation.
- On the basis of the results of the internal CAF assessments, each unit is to develop an improvement protocol and action plan with concrete targets, improvement measures, operating plan and description of the allocation of responsibilities.

4. THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

All elements of the activities of the Regional Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufetat) shall be characterised by quality. This means e.g. that all its employees have an independent responsibility to meet the demands for quality in their work.

The work shall build on the following principles: a) Organised and recognised knowledge, b) Participation of the users, c) Openness and respect, d) Legal rights, e) Good work processes and clear responsibility, f) Cost effectiveness, g) Established standards, h) Good fact basis for development of services and i) Improvements on the basis of experience.

The implementation of CAF shall contribute to a greater degree of success by basing the work on these principles. This is in keeping with the project's outcome measure:

- The units that have implemented CAF have routines in place that allow them to continually detect weaknesses and improve the quality of services.

The results have shown that all units score more on the instrumental side than on the results side. On the basis of these results the regional management decided to coordinate parts of the improvement work. On the foundation of a total overview of CAF results from the units, the regional management, in consultation with the units, has chosen to prioritise measurements of user satisfaction and employee satisfaction as focus areas for 2008, and established the following two targets:

- Develop and introduce systematic measurements of user satisfaction
- Develop and introduce systematic measurements of employee satisfaction

In order to develop measurements of satisfaction that can be used regularly at all the units in Bufetat, southern region, the regional office established two working groups in which both representatives of the regional office and subordinate units participated. The following tasks were defined:

- Assessing and defining the choice of target groups
- Discussing and assessing current methods
- Developing concrete questions in relation to three main areas a) structures, b) process, c) results
- Evaluating technical solutions for collecting and processing information
- Suggesting guidelines for the practical execution of similar surveys

When the surveys have been completely developed and implemented all units shall carry out similar systematic user and employee satisfaction surveys. This is in line with state regulation for service performance and central to the services' strategy for user-guided quality development

5. LESSONS LEARNED

The execution of internal CAF self-assessment is not a target in itself, but a first step towards working with continual improvements. The results of self-assessments should lead to concrete improvement activities.

Based on the experience of the implementation of CAF so far, there are two particular aspects that should be mentioned:

- Enough time must be set aside for the activities which are included in the internal self evaluation process both in relation to introduction and training, individual evaluation and consensus
- The workbook shall contribute to inspiration and motivation and shall awaken the employees' interest and curiosity for the working process

After complete training and implementation with each individual unit, the participants in the internal CAF self-evaluation groups participated in an evaluation in relation to the training and implementation process. The main feature of this evaluation shows the following:

- Very different evaluation in relation to the use of time for individual inspection
- The prepared CAF material (work booklet and documentation file) were assessed as useful and inspiring aids
- Internal self assessments based on CAF are valuable for improving the quality in the individual unit

In addition, the result of the evaluation further shows that the CAF process has been useful in increasing the understanding of quality work generally and that information on CAF, both in relation to understanding of the model and the working process at the forefront of the implementation process, is very important.

To ensure that the results of internal CAF self-assessments lead to concrete and efficient improvement processes the regional management should have a focus on the development, execution and follow-up of concrete action plans in the units:

- The development of improvement protocols and action plans. Clear, measurable and concrete with continual follow-ups
- Improvement work shall be run in a structured and systematic way, based on Deming's quality circles
- The regional management's responsibility is primarily to develop a structure for improvement work with the associated routines and allocation of responsibility, as well as to support the units with the improvement work
- The unit's responsibility is to perform the improvement work based on concrete action plans
- Information about the improvements carried out shall be disseminated and made available in all units in the southern region, for users, partners and stakeholders

6. PROJECT INNOVATION CONTENT ADAPTABILITY

Implementation of CAF as a quality model in the Regional Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufetat) Southern Norway means that the units themselves continually detect weaknesses and improve quality. By using CAF's various quality perspectives (in relation to effects and results) on their own tasks, the employees are given a tool for guiding and controlling their own work processes in order to meet the demands for quality in their work.

The improvement protocol and actions plans developed for the relevant period should be integrated in the annual strategy, activity and budget documentation. The improvement plans must be made known to all employees at the organisation and in all units.