

Case study: a HR service for the 21st century NHS

Luton and Dunstable Hospital NHS Foundation Trust created the new post of Director of Organisational Development (OD) following a restructure of the executive team last summer. During the search for the new permanent post holder, I was appointed as interim Director of OD.

Stephen Ramsden, Chief Executive, asked me to review the Personnel and Development service for the Trust. He felt that the Trust need to adopt a more commercial and modern approach and that a strong, highly effective HR department was essential to deal with the challenges of the QIPP agenda in the NHS from April 2010.

Within a month I had completed a comprehensive review of the personnel function. This revealed fundamental structural and cultural problems. The message that emerged was that managers felt they weren't getting the right level of support from the function. With around 70 per cent of the Trust's costs related to workforce, robust workforce planning systems and high-level support for managers are vital.

These issues needed to be addressed before the transformational change the Trust was looking for around workforce could be achieved. I presented a proposal to the Executive and the Board to radically restructure the service to make it more responsive, supportive and customer focused. The new HR function would work differently: at a professional level, embedded within the organisation to support managers to meet the business objectives.

Many of the personnel staff were resistant to change - 23 people were at risk, out of a department of 32, and the majority had worked in the same way for years. A consultation period ensued, during which I worked with the personnel

team and key stakeholders, including managers, clinicians and the trade unions.

In my experience as a HR Director in the NHS, this was one of the most challenging change programmes to transform a traditional personnel service into a HR business partner model. To support the change programme Associates of Consulting at 216 were engaged by the Trust. Their input included creating new job descriptions and evaluations, a development workshop, a robust selection process to select people for the new more skilled HR roles and providing coaching support for those affected by the change process. In addition, we developed a new set HR policies and procedures to support the new service model.

A key development in the change programme was the appointment of Clare Edmondson as the new permanent Director of OD.

Clare Edmondson said:

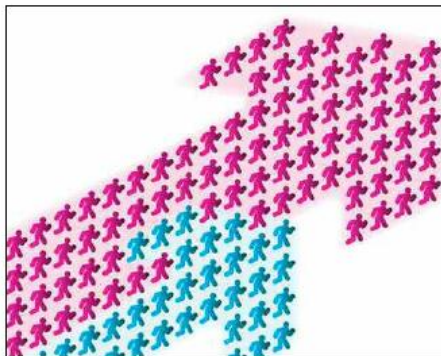
'Paul and his team developed a new HR structure to modernise the service to meet the demands of the Trust's transformational agenda. The Board and Executive were supportive of the radical change programme which was successfully implemented in five months. The challenge for me will be to embed the new structure with a development programme to support the HR business partner model to achieve sustainable organisational change.'

The new service model developed by Consulting at 216 will position the Trust to manage the workforce more effectively and address the challenges facing the 21st Century NHS to increase workforce productivity.



Paul Beal is the managing director of Consulting at 216. He has worked as an executive director in the NHS in acute, primary care, community and mental health settings in and around London. His interim and consultancy assignments have included NHS South West Essex, NHS Leicester City, NHS Direct. He is a Fellow of the CIPD and has leadership development, coaching and counselling qualifications

Consulting at 216 work with NHS clients to develop OD programmes to support transformational change.



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