

ODS ROUND UP | Nov 2009

Patient experience project in the spotlight

ODS' work on an innovative project to improve patients' experiences of healthcare has been in the national spotlight this month.

Senior consultant Jackie Barringer and a team from our client, NHS North West, presented their work on the 'Vital Signs Care Cards' project at a seminar organised by the NHS Confederation.

The 'Delivering great patient experience' event was chaired by NHS Confederation Head of Policy Nigel Edwards and focused on the lessons learned from the pilot project in five acute trusts across the North West.

Funded by the Health Foundation, the Vital Signs project involved using themed playing cards, carrying a range of statements, as a device to encourage patients to voice their emotional needs and care preferences.

Mandy Wearne, Director of Service Experience at NHS North West, led the presentation of the project at the seminar.

Senior consultant for ODS Jackie Barringer said: "ODS brought an organisational development perspective to this project - helping clinicians and managers alike to understand the barriers to change and how these could be overcome."

"It was an honour to present our work at such a prestigious event."

ODS is now completing a report on the pilot, which will be used to support funding bids to support more initiatives, potentially across the whole of the North West region.

Leading public services through difficult times

Leadership is a major theme for our work this winter, as we implement six different leadership programmes across a wide range of public sector organisations - from local government to the police force and the NHS.

Although each organisation faces individual challenges, common themes are emerging from the different programmes, including: increasing productivity, doing more with less and developing new ways of working.

ODS joint managing director Donna Bradshaw said: "Strong leaders are essential to the success of any organisation.

"This is even more so in challenging times, when leaders have an essential role to play in communicating the need for change and sharing the new vision and strategy for the organisation."

ODS often undertakes individual coaching as part of a leadership programme, and this one-to-one support can be a catalyst for major positive change, as one recent participant has found.

Former local authority manager 'Diane' (a pseudonym) received five individual coaching sessions as part of a Senior Leadership Development Programme in Lancashire.

The coaching enabled her to identify and secure a secondment with a national organisation to progress her career - and it has significantly boosted her confidence.

Her current employer is so impressed with the results of the coaching that it has agreed to fund an additional two sessions

Diane said: "The coaching sessions enabled me to see how I have limited myself in the past, and identify the strategies I need to put in place to overcome past, present and future challenges."

Read more about Diane's story [here](#).

ODS clients recognised in national awards

The inspirational work of one of our clients - the Homeless and Vulnerable Persons team from NHS Ashton, Leigh and Wigan - has been recognised in a prestigious national awards scheme.

The 13-strong team made it through to the finals of the Guardian newspaper's Public Services Awards 2009 - held in London this week.

The achievement comes just months after the team finished an intensive team-building programme with us.

Being shortlisted for the Progress - Diversity and Equality award is the culmination of a journey that began early in 2009, when the PCT team came to ODS for an intensive training programme.

The six-month programme - led by ODS consultant Stuart Taylor - delivered a measurable improvement in the team's dynamics and confidence, encouraging them to showcase their achievements and expand the service.

Since completing the course, the team has grown further - with three new members of staff joining, and a further two about to join.

It has already expanded its services to include new ideas, such as a leg ulcer clinic and five-a-side football including mini health assessments, and has more planned for the future.

Margaret Fairhurst, Manager of the Homeless and Vulnerable Persons team for NHS Ashton Wigan and Leigh, said: "ODS made a real difference to our team - giving us the confidence to enter this awards scheme and to expand our service for the future."

Driving success for the Veggie Van

ODS is helping an award-winning healthy eating project drive further success.

The Veggie Van - funded by NHS Knowsley - is a not-for-profit community project in Merseyside which sells fresh fruit and vegetables to homes, schools and businesses.

ODS has been brought on board to help develop the four-strong team and turn their enthusiasm and ideas for the future into a comprehensive business plan.



The six-month project has seen ODS working closely with the Veggie Van's committed team of staff - supporting the personal development of individuals as well as business planning for the service.

ODS consultant Victoria Kehoe said: "It's fantastic to work with a team that are making such a difference to the community.

"The team have already been extremely successful - winning awards and grants to expand the service. Our role is to build on that success and provide the planning and the systems that will steer the project towards an even brighter future."

ODS business manager Kiran Southworth is also to support the project - providing some training on the widely-used Sage accounting software system.

Kiran said: "I am delighted to have the opportunity to take a more client-facing role, and to share some of my own business skills with the Veggie Van team."

ODS will continue to work with the Knowsley team until Spring 2010.

Soap Box

The need to become more business-like is an often-repeated mantra in the public sector - more frequently so in these recessionary times

But there is a risk that the public sector can over-complicate what it means to think like a business - with the result that innovation is stifled instead of being encouraged.

Far from being mutually exclusive worlds, there is in fact already much crossover between the public and the private sectors. 'Being business-like' is something many in public services are already doing.

Two of the teams featured in this newsletter are fantastic examples of this.

The Homeless and Vulnerable Persons team in Wigan and the Veggie Van in Knowsley are successful because they understand their customers' needs and respond to them - a fundamental tenet of good business.

Even more important than this is leadership. Strong, emotionally intelligent leaders are fundamental to creating successful organisations, whether in the public or the private sector, and we must not lose sight of this.

The public sector is full of examples of great leadership and I would urge these leaders to be confident in what they have to offer, and to use it as a springboard to drive further success.

Carol Brooks