



The health of OD in Health...meeting the challenges

Over the summer The Change Able Partnership was commissioned by the NHS in Yorkshire and Humber to conduct an OD survey across the region. The aim was to learn what OD leaders are paying most attention to, what OD interventions are working well and what development they would most value as practitioners to be able to meet the evolving challenges in the changing health and social care landscape. We presented our report at the beginning of September.

We were delighted with the comprehensive participation in the survey. It is clear that there is a wide range of OD activity going on all around the region as Trusts grapple with many challenges. The big OD issues which are the focus of much current attention are:

- Continuing restructuring in many parts of the system – not only the new commissioning architecture but also developing clinical leadership in many areas and changes in delivery of community services
- Focus on improving the patient experience and service quality
- Managing tight finances
- And engaging people at every level with the personal and organisational implications of these issues.

Going forward OD practitioners indicate that the challenges are about bigger system transformation. A number of those interviewed were very aware that there is lots of talk about partnership and cross-boundary working but that more radical change requires people to be more willing to challenge the status quo and to question current organisational forms. This is tough because it requires an openness and willingness to let go of 'self-interest' in the process of exploration. OD practitioners are anxious about how best to support this.

Many practitioners tell positive stories about OD activities that are working well and delivering benefits. These range from leadership development work to much more granular work with clinical teams on care pathways and

processes. Common threads in all the positive stories were a clearly identified development need and carefully tailored interventions delivered by credible practitioners (sometimes from the OD team but often supported or led by people from other parts of the organisation). Senior level support for OD interventions is key - although hierarchical, top-down, 'sheep dip' approaches to development are less successful. Given the size of the NHS a major challenge is how to offer sufficient bespoke at scale.

Not surprisingly OD leads take their own development seriously . Recognising the complexity and potential sensitivity of the ongoing OD agenda many are asking how they can work effectively on wider system change. The priority is felt to be stronger sharing and networking between organisations – to benefit from others' learning and expertise and to become less reliant on external provision. But pressures on time are felt to be a barrier.

Models for delivery of OD vary across the system but many OD leads are building networks of people within their organisations to work as facilitators and coaches in a range of different situations. This is seen as building a sustainable model for OD work against the backdrop of financial austerity.

For more information about the survey contact:

carol.pickering@yorksandhumber.nhs.uk