

Case Study – Supporting Transformation in East London

Introduction

Sir Sam Everington is the Clinical Chair for Tower Hamlet's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Co-Chair for the North East London Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) Clinical Senate. He attended a bespoke Staff College Leadership Development and Clinical Associate Induction Programme as part of NHS England's New Care Model Teams, to support the 'Advance Care in Care Homes' Programme in 2015.

In 2016, he and colleagues from Barts Health, Waltham Forest CCG and Newham CCG, asked Staff College to develop a programme to support their Outpatient Transformation Programme and Programme Board. In 2017, they approached Staff College to develop a pilot programme to support the STP.

In his case study, Sam reflects on why he's so passionate about working with Staff College, and what he and others have gained from the experience.

What made you ask Staff College to work with the Outpatient Transformation Programme?

"For a number of years, I had been passionately advocating transforming the way we see our patients in the community and hospital, doing away with the 'Choose and Forget' system and reducing our reliance on appointments in outpatients. My vision was to move to a system where our focus is on the patient and their needs. A patient records system that allows us in primary care, and our consultant colleagues in secondary care, to see our patients' records and reduce the need to duplicate costly diagnostic tests in hospital, simply because the hospitals can't access the records. In so many cases, what us, as GPs need, is simply advice from our consultant colleagues about how best to care for our patients.

By changing the traditional roles of GP and consultant, with consultants providing advice to GPs, we can reduce the number of patients seen in outpatients and free up more time for consultants who can use this to work to the top of their ticket, seeing the more complex patients that require more specialist care.

As four separate organisations, we had agreed on the rationale for the transformation programme. For me, I wanted to focus on the leadership of the programme, particularly given the complexity of what we were trying to achieve. What we were trying to do was really change the way people thought, and to me, we were never going to do that without exceptional leadership.

As such, I, and some of my colleagues, felt Staff College's powerful approach and focus on leadership development could really help us as a leadership group, and our leaders who would be leading the changes within their services. I wanted everyone to really understand what leadership is about and to focus on the mission rather than getting caught in the difficulties of making it all happen.

What difference did having Staff College's involvement make?

“Staff College initially supported us with our early work to cement our vision and articulate the case for change. Their approach was hugely powerful and challenged us to think more in terms of our mission and stopped us getting so tied down with our individual organisations’ needs.

John (Staff College Faculty Member) would observe our monthly Board Meetings and run a development session afterwards. I found the sessions really helpful to provide the opportunity for people with different views and backgrounds to share how they felt and particularly to provide space for more introverted members to share their views. This developed greater understanding about the dynamics between members and developed a greater sense of trust between us.

Before, there was a great sense of institutionalisation and disempowerment. People were so used to working in their current environments that they had a lack of expectation and it was easy for them to fall into victim mode. Staff College’s approach challenged individuals to step up more and enabled people to be bolder and more open about how they felt.

The trust that we developed between us made it easier for us to have the difficult conversations. In a programme such as this, involving so many organisations, we’re never all going to agree on everything, but being able to have the courage to discuss the issues and understand the different perspectives around the table enabled us to have better conversations and make better decisions that we could get behind.

John also helped us to focus our meetings more, to think more deeply beforehand about how to run the meeting, ensuring things were only on the agenda if we could actually give it the time it needed. This led to meetings being more focussed and a better use of all of our time.

What have you personally gained from the experience?

“My experience attending Staff College programmes has made me think differently about things all the time. I am constantly reminded of things I’ve learnt.

I think more about how to articulate the need for change and the vision first and take more time to share the narrative and build consensus for what we’re trying to achieve.

The post-meeting reviews have helped me to focus more on using the meeting time wisely. Particularly about what I can do beforehand to ensure the agenda’s realistic and that we spend the time talking about the issues that really need discussing, not just the ones that might be easier.

I’ve become more aware of the dynamics during meetings. I take more time to notice and understand why someone’s behaving in a particular way or something’s happening. By taking the time to understand the reasons why, I’m better able to see where issues are rising up and address them in the moment whereas previously, those same issues would have just lead to arguments and conflict.