

Case Study



The Proposal

Cardiff Metropolitan University's Centre for Work Based Learning (CWBL) teamed up with key staff members from 1000 Lives Improvement (formally Public Health Wales), in a spirit of "critical friendship," to co-create an innovative series of short course learning opportunities for Organisational Development (OD) Practitioners.

The aim was to equip participants with the relevant knowledge, skills, and techniques to develop a practical understanding of how to best deliver OD interventions in the workplace.

Background:

Public Health Wales (PHW) was established as an NHS Trust on 1 October 2009 and aims to provide and manage a range of health services for the public.

Public Health Wales aims for "a healthier, happier and fairer Wales" and to "protect and improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities."

The Centre for Work Based Learning (CWBL) won a tender from Public Health Wales to provide a high-level training program to a group of middle managers in NHS Wales, specifically to co-produce their Organisational Development capabilities.

How CWBL approached this

CWBL's task was to co-design a programme that allowed participants to apply their learning to deliver change using OD interventions in a range of situations, environments, and political contexts, through working with a range of people and groups.

The programme developed was co-designed between staff at 1000 Lives Improvement, CWBL and the participants themselves. In March 2013 a development event was held in Cardiff during which each participant was asked to contribute their expectations and needs to the design team. 1000 Lives Improvement and CWBL then tailored the programme to the specific needs of the participants. This included steerage on the course content and delivery methods, to the times, dates and locations of the taught sessions.

` This pathway goes a long way in developing the managers and equipping them with a range of 'tools' to influence, and plan for the current changing landscape. `

Pathway Participant

What CWBL did to develop the Programme?

To achieve the programme learning outcomes and design requirements from the participants, CWBL co-designed an educational experience that reviewed a full range of skills and activities to support the participants as a leader of change programmes, as well as equipping them with the skills to champion mature improvement teams within their respective parts of NHS Wales.

The training program covered Organisational Development, allowing each participant to develop a change project that they were involved with, gaining the knowledge and experience required to implement it efficiently and appropriately

This focus on the collaborative nature of the course development, the access to experts, and the flexibility of delivery (i.e. blended approach that allowed each participant to take what they needed from the programme/ work based learning elements of the program) would allow the course to have a direct impact on each individual's current workload, as well as imparting skills that could be applied to future projects and professional situations.

The Programme Itself

The course was created to maximise skill development as well as softer skill acquisition and dynamic change leadership. The candidates were expected to learn new skills and apply them as well as reflect on what they as (change agents) can do better next time.

The delivery team engaged high-profile speakers to attend events and pitch on relevant aspects of development, performance and leadership. For example, Andy McCann, psychologist to the Welsh Rugby Team, gave an after dinner talk at the first training event in Cardiff on High Performance Teams and Mental Toughness.

The 1000 Lives Improvement and Cardiff Metropolitan University Organisational Development Pathway ran over a year, from March 2013 - February 2014, with 5 training events held during the year, supported by online resources provided through the Academi Learning Channel, and telephone and email support from the experts in PHW and CWBL throughout.

Course approach summary:

- 1) The technical solution which solves a problem or improves a process
- 2) The social and leadership skills which determine the quality of the solution and its sustainability especially via the personal interface and capturing of a change narrative from both leaders and followers (the context of successful change)
- 3) The community of practice which provides an informal support network of individuals who address problems/ opportunities to improve support in the same manner, with similar methods of engagement, similar technical methods and can share experiential learning
- 4) Self-assessment diagnostic for both the individual and organisational level

The Ongoing Benefits of the Programme

Cardiff Met also offered an additional opportunity to accredit the hands-on learning that participants experienced at the training events and through their supported personal study and development in the workplace. This gave participants the chance to gain up to 60 Masters level credits to gain a Certificate in Continuing Professional Development, or put towards a further course of study like a full Masters or Post-Graduate Certificate of Education.

The Outcomes of the Programme

Feedback from the programme was widely positive; participants confirmed they had gained a critical understanding of a range of tools, techniques, models and knowledge that can be applied to enhance organisational effectiveness. They also now have a greater influence and ability to work with others to positively affect planned emergent change and have developed a network of OD practitioners who will support each other during and beyond the life time of the pathway.

Participants communicated that they had gained a wide range of specific examples of the skills and techniques on the pathway and clearly valued this aspect highly. It was also noted that participants' relationships and ability to influence had increased as a result of the pathway.

In summary the participants believed the pathway represented an excellent return on investment for the organisation and would recommend the pathway to others.

Please [click here](#) for fantastic feedback interviews with the OD Practitioner Pathway Programme participants.

Testimonials

'People who've been on the course are thinking differently and have benefitted from having space to reflect'

'The participants in my organisation did get a lot out of it. They had really good outcomes in improved knowledge, skills and networks'

'I feel more confident with my role as a leader of a change project now and OD and I have got better awareness of people'

'I feel more real and more myself in the job now... I feel like I am getting different results from it... I word things differently and I think it's getting that trust there that perhaps wasn't there before'

'I have learnt to think differently about approaching challenges. I am far less focussed on setting and achieving "the goal" and can relax more into a position of continual improvements to the service which may change the final destination but will allow the service to develop in a more natural way that will aid progress. I am much more flexible in my approach and willing to debate and experiment where I did not have the confidence to before'

If you would like to discuss the design and delivery of a bespoke programme that could take your organisation to the next level, please do not hesitate to contact us on 02920 205510 or cwbl@cardiffmet.ac.uk