

Summer 2014



VERITA



NEWS Issue 22

IMPROVEMENT THROUGH INVESTIGATION

Welcome

The last quarter has been one of the busiest I remember for Verita. Among other things we have been business partner to the HSJ Innovation Summit, spent a morning with colleagues from the Singapore Ministry of Health discussing how our expertise in governance can help its healthcare system and supported Kate Lampard as the NHS published the Savile reports. That range of activity says much about the work we do these days from improvement through to assuring serious investigations.

We are delighted to have been one of the HSJ summit's sponsors and that our new organisational resilience assessment tool (ORA) generated so much interest from managers and clinicians at the event. We are equally delighted to become the first corporate sponsors of The Foundling Museum, an organisation which like Verita prides itself on its professional integrity, innovation and drive to make things better.

Best wishes

Ed Marsden
Managing partner

Savile NHS investigations

Speaking in the House of Commons, Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, secretary of state for health, thanked Kate Lampard and her team for their oversight and assurance work on the 28 NHS investigations into Savile's abuses published on 26 June 2014.

Jeremy Hunt initially commissioned Kate Lampard to ensure that the investigators for the three main NHS investigations at Broadmoor Hospital, Leeds General Infirmary and Stoke Mandeville Hospital had taken "all necessary steps to establish the truth" and followed "a robust process aimed at protecting the interests of patients". As more allegations came to light, her remit was extended to cover all NHS investigations into Savile's activities. Given the complexity and scale of the task, Verita was commissioned to provide support.

Kate Lampard explains: "The oversight process has been comprehensive but proportionate. In the case of the investigations relating to the three main investigations, it has entailed a systematic evidencing and assessment of the capacity and capabilities of the investigation teams and the robustness of their processes."

She continues: "In relation to all the other investigations, my team and I have provided guidance on the processes they should follow, answered queries about processes and commented on their reports."

She concluded that the investigations had been done well and could be relied upon.

Commenting on the importance of the investigations, Kate Lampard says: "The NHS investigations into Savile's activities are a public demonstration that allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct are taken seriously and will be sensitively and thoroughly investigated. I believe this will help to encourage victims to report abuses in future, and may deter others who might be minded to commit abuses."

The secretary of state has asked Kate Lampard to identify the issues and lessons for the wider NHS arising from investigations into Savile's behaviour. Verita is supporting Kate Lampard in this role, notably by helping to devise and deliver a programme of evidence gathering. Verita managing partner Ed Marsden will also be working with Kate Lampard on writing the lessons learnt report. The report will be published in the autumn.

New complaints diagnostic launched

A trust that wanted to identify problems in advance of a CQC visit has become the first to benefit from Verita's complaints diagnostic tool. Thanks to the diagnostic tool, the trust was able to target specific areas for improvement ahead of the visit.

Partner Derek Mechen and senior consultant Amber Sargent spent two and a half days on site reviewing documents and interviewing the complaints team, clinicians, managers and the trust's chairman.

The interviewees were guided through a series of structured questions devised to capture specific information about the quality of complaints handling. The questions are based on previous work that Verita has conducted in complaints handling and processes.

Within two days Verita produced a report for the trust's board highlighting strengths and weaknesses in six key areas including the level of staff engagement with complaints and the design of the complaints team.

Amber Sargent explains: "We were delighted with how smoothly our maiden complaints assessment service ran. The feedback from the trust has been very positive."

For more information, please contact Amber Sargent on 020 7494 5670 or email ambersargent@verita.net.

A visit from Singapore's Ministry of Health

Representatives from Singapore's Ministry of Health visited Verita to learn about regulatory systems within the UK healthcare sector.

Senior consultant Amber Sargent explains: "Their visit was an opportunity for us to demonstrate the ways in which Verita interacts with regulatory bodies and showcase the range of services that Verita offers."

The Verita team discussed recent work involving the management of complaints, whistle-blowing, incident investigations and some of the diagnostic tools developed to help providers identify risk in healthcare organisations.

During their visit the representatives also met with Monitor, the Department of Health, the Care Quality Commission, the Trust Development Authority and Public Health England.

Resilience assessment pilot

Verita's new patient safety and governance initiative - Organisational Resilience Assessment - has been successfully piloted in a London trust.

ORA assesses a individual department against ten areas that we have established underpin 'resilience'. The tool is based on Verita's extensive catalogue of completed investigations - very much 'real world' examples of failure of care or governance - coupled with strong academic research.

ORA requires three different groups of staff - one drawn from the executive, one from senior clinicians and one from front line staff - to spend 90 minutes answering structured questions that reveal how resilient a department will be to adverse events that can lead to a more serious incident.

Outputs of the process give real insight into areas of tension or misunderstanding between the groups. By flagging up weaknesses, whether these are in structures, processes, behaviours or attitudes ORA allows pre-emptive action to be taken before the serious incident occurs.

The assessment costs £6,500. If you are interested to find out about how our Organisational Resilience Assessment can help you please contact Peter Killwick on peterkillwick@verita.net or 020 7494 5670.

Foundling Museum partnership

Verita has become The Foundling Museum's first corporate partner.

The Foundling Museum explores the history of the Foundling Hospital and the ways artists from William Hogarth to Grayson Perry have been inspired to improve children's lives for over 270 years.

The museum's director Caro Howell comments: "The museum relies on supporters and partners to help not only with the care of our collections but also with the many projects we run enabling artists to work alongside vulnerable and marginalised children."

Verita's managing partner Ed Marsden adds: "The Foundling Museum's story is moving and inspirational. It's a story of decent people from different walks of life coming together to do the right thing. Verita is proud to become part of that story.

He adds: "Both organisations are young, independent and have built a reputation for professional integrity and innovation. Most importantly we share the same aim: to

make a difference to those with whom we work."

Verita will also sponsor The Foundling Museum's autumn exhibition The generous Georgian: Dr Richard Mead. Dr Mead encouraged his wealthy clients who included George II and Sir Isaac Newton to support the charity and pioneered the inoculation of the foundling children against smallpox. Other supporters include the Wellcome Trust and the Royal College of Physicians.

Culturally appropriate governance in the Middle East

Verita will be running a seminar on developing governance and patient safety standards. This comes in the wake of our recent work in Abu Dhabi and is aimed at forward thinking organisations looking to capitalise on opportunities in developing markets.

Verita partner Peter Killwick explains: "The 'NHS brand' has real prestige across the globe. Investment by UK operators in local provision is generally very welcome, as it is seen to raise standards of care, transparency of outcomes and quality of delivery. Along with opportunity, however, comes some very real challenges in adapting UK standards to local norms. As well as non-negotiable legal and regulatory requirements, in competitive markets providers must also offer services that are socially and culturally appropriate or patients will simply choose to go elsewhere. Striking the balance between the maintenance of UK standards and local practice is difficult."

The seminar will take place in London in early September 2014. To register your interest please contact Peter Killwick on peterkillwick@verita.net or 020 7494 5670.

ACE complaints

Arts Council England (ACE) has awarded Verita the contract to provide independent review of complaints arising from applications to its national portfolio funding programme for 2015-18.

Verita partner Lesley Sargeant who led Verita's bid for the contract says: "We are delighted that ACE has chosen us as the programme's independent complaint reviewer for the second time.

"Competition for arts funding is fiercer than ever so it's even more important the allocation process is fair. Verita's role will be to review whether ACE correctly followed its own policies and procedures, and treated complainants politely, fairly and without discrimination."

Verita has established a nine-strong team to ensure all complaints are reviewed within three months.

Mental health boost

Experienced mental health practitioner Geoff Brennan will increase his commitment to Verita from one to three days a week from September 2014.

Geoff's remit will be to help develop Verita's mental health consultancy offer as well as contribute to its expertise in conducting investigations. He explains: "I'm pleased to be extending my commitment to Verita. I'm looking forward to working with its experienced mental health homicide investigation team and helping to develop its consultancy offer."

As well as being both a registered nurse and a registered mental health nurse Geoff has worked in a variety of academic posts teaching psychosocial interventions across London and the south east of England.

Royal Free training day

Verita ran a systematic incident investigation training course at the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust on 18 June.

Chris Brougham led the course for a range of staff including quality, assurance and governance managers and laboratory and clinical staff.

The session was well received by the commissioner as well as those who attended. Chris was accompanied by Verita intern Charlie de Montfort who commented: "I was encouraged by the extent to which the participants engaged with the training session. My impression was that by the end of the session, the participants had not only enjoyed themselves but also recognised the value of the systematic investigative process."

For more information on Verita's training courses please contact Chloe Taylor at chloetaylor@verita.net.

Contacting us For more information about Verita and any of the services we provide please contact Scott Robertson on 020 7494 5670 or email scottrobertson@verita.net

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