

Verita Newsletter Issue 25 – Summer 2015



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Ed's Welcome

Verita was a supporting partner at the HSJ Provider Summit this June.

The event presented an opportunity for us to meet with board level staff as well as senior individuals from regulators, the TDA, think tanks and the royal colleges.

How to save £20 billion, adopt new organisational models and maintain quality of care were central themes of the summit. CEOs spoke about the need to engage staff in the challenges the service faces. Liberating the discretionary effort high performing trusts gain from their staff is a major challenge for the NHS.

One of the benefits we have found using [ORA](#) is staff engagement. Having used our interactive assessment across a number of trusts and services we've been struck by the impact it has had in creating high levels of engagement with participants. We've found that the experience of working in small facilitated groups enables staff, across a wide range of grades, to think about organisational vulnerability and resilience in ways that they can relate to and own. Participants have left the sessions enthused and engaged.

With best wishes

Ed Marsden
Managing partner

Help with implementing recommendations

Verita and the BMJ are developing a support package to help healthcare providers implement recommendations to improve patient safety.

Verita's managing partner Ed Marsden comments: "While it is relatively easy to identify and make recommendations on patient safety issues, the real work begins when it comes to putting those recommendations into practice. Many health providers struggle with this. Verita and the BMJ have responded by combining forces to develop a support package that can be tailored to specific patient safety interventions."

Verita will develop online workbooks to guide managerial, clinical and nursing teams systematically through the implementation process. The workbooks will be part of a package of online tools tailored for individual clients based on BMJ's Quality Improvement Programme (QIP), and will include case studies, articles and guidance as well as other useful tools. BMJ's head of business development, Dr Rufus Helm, comments: "QIP has already proven itself a highly effective tool in supporting individuals and teams deliver improvements in quality and we welcome the opportunity to direct its capabilities to resolving patient safety issues at an institutional level."

If you would like to get involved in the development phase or are interested in using this product please contact Ed Marsden by email edmarsden@verita.net or telephone 020 7494 5670

Yarl's Wood review

Serco has commissioned Verita associate Kate Lampard to conduct an independent investigation into concerns raised in the media about Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre. Allegations have emerged about the abuse of female detainees by staff, a woman having a miscarriage being refused assistance and serious incidents of self-harm. Verita's managing partner Ed Marsden is co-investigator.

The investigation will cover the culture and practices at Yarl's Wood and consider whether the terms of the new contract recently awarded to Serco to manage Yarl's Wood will address the issues under scrutiny. The report will present recommendations on actions Serco should take to address any weaknesses or issues identified.

Kate Lampard comments: "We will include all levels of staff, from front line to management and contract leadership, in our investigation. The terms of reference are comprehensive and will lead to a robust report."

The report, to be submitted in the autumn, will include recommendations to address any weaknesses or issues identified.

Few mental health homicides are preventable

Less than 10 per cent of the independent reviews into mental health homicide conducted by Verita since 2000 were either predictable or preventable, according to the results of a thematic review of our database carried out by senior consultant Geoff Brennan.

Geoff presented the results of the review at a learning event in London. He said: “That the majority of mental health homicides are not predictable or preventable emphasises that investigations are not about finding people to blame but finding ways to improve services. We hope that our identification of themes helps people focus on what seems to be important.”

Dr Sarah Markham, a representative from Verita’s mental health advisory group, attended the event. Reflecting on the day, Sarah said: “The need for the families of both the victim and the perpetrator to receive support and for there to be more efficient and reliable information sharing between health and social services teams were dominant themes.”

Other themes covered in Geoff’s presentation included risk assessment and management, dealing with non-engagement and disengagement, communication and multi-agency working as well as issues with care planning. He included examples from reviews in which the care and treatment of the perpetrator had proved particularly difficult. Good practice cases studies were also discussed, one of which required no recommendations from Verita investigators.

A director of nursing at a large London trust said she found the Verita presentation “utterly grounded in common sense” and that it offered a relevant insight into the approach needed for mental health homicide investigations across London.

Making hospitals safer

“Suspend disbelief” was one of the key messages from a conference in Leeds on making hospitals safer for patients, visitors, staff and volunteers. The conference was organised by Verita to give those involved in the NHS Savile independent investigations the opportunity to share their findings and experiences.

Peter Saunders, founder of The National Association for People Abused in Childhood, set the scene by describing the scale of child sex abuse which he described as a global humanitarian issue.

Delegates said that they valued the open and honest approach to lessons learnt from those involved in the investigations and having the opportunity to reflect on how to improve practice in their own organisations.

Other speakers included Kate Lampard who oversaw the NHS Savile investigations; Professor Sue Proctor who led the independent investigation at the Leeds General Infirmary; and Clare Linley, deputy chief nurse at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, who has been instrumental in implementing the lessons learnt at her trust.

Clare Linley described how far her trust has come since the publication of the Leeds Savile investigation. She gave a detailed account of the changes that have already been made and those which have been slower to implement. Clare was able to report that the trust is now better prepared, more proactive and has staff that are more willing to speak out if they have concerns.

If you would be interested in attending a similar half-day event in London, please contact Laura Conlon on 020 7494 5670 or email lauraconlon@verita.net.

Consent in practice; get up to date

Verita associate director, [Dr Stephanie Bown](#), now leads a training course on consent in practice, tailored to the needs of individual clinical teams. The course covers the current legal, regulatory and professional framework applying to informed consent, the risks of getting it wrong, the use of shared decision making aids, communication, team working and strengthening defence.

Stephanie, a former director at the Medical Protection Society (MPS) and the National Clinical Assessment Service (NCAS) has extensive experience of the medico-legal and professional issues that arise in healthcare. The course equips clinicians with a confident understanding of their legal, professional and ethical obligations as well as the appropriate tools and techniques they need to fulfil these requirements in practice. This will lead to patients receiving high quality and safe care, more engaged staff and the protection of your organisations reputation.

Consent in practice is a salient topic. The Supreme Court's judgement in *Montgomery v Lanarkshire Health Board* has direct relevance to the practice of every clinician in the UK. The judgement confirms the right of a competent patient to decide which, if any, available treatment to consent to and the duty of the doctor to ensure that the patient is aware of material risks involved in any recommended and reasonable alternative treatments. The patient's right to self-determination trumps the professional's 'best interests' test.

Awareness of this amongst practitioners is variable. In a recent editorial in the BMJ, consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist Leroy Edozian writes: "medical professionalism demands that the gap between the ideal and the operationalised methods of consent should be closed." Stephanie agrees: "as it stands, a mixture of ignorance, confusion, fear and learned

helplessness creates a potent cocktail of risk for patients, staff and healthcare organisations.”

For more information on how Verita can help you support your staff, contact Stephanie on 020 7494 5670, or stephaniebown@verita.net.

Welcome Gemma Caprio

Gemma Caprio joined Verita as a senior consultant in spring 2015.

Gemma brings a range of health sector experience to the team. Her recent posts include working at NHS England in support of a regional chief nurse on the Morecambe Bay independent investigation, at the North West Strategic Health Authority supporting the transition to NHS England and at Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust as a governance manager.

Gemma is currently building Verita's presence in the north through a number of appointments with senior NHS staff across the region. She is also reviewing the serious incident policy at large London teaching trust and implementing our serious incident diagnostic.

Gemma Caprio comments: "I am excited to be part of Verita and to help build its presence in the north from our new Leeds office."

New Leeds office

Verita has opened a new office in Leeds. Director Chris Brougham and recently appointed senior consultant Gemma Caprio are now based at Park House, Park Square West.

Chris Brougham explains: “The amenities at the new Leeds office provide an ideal platform for Verita to continue to widen and deepen its client base in the north. We’ve made great progress in the last three years with more trusts and CCGs commissioning consultancy, serious incident diagnostics and training in addition to independent investigations and reviews. Having a permanent base in Leeds that is accessible to clients will help us develop our relationship with commissioners.”

Chris and Gemma can be reached on 0113 357 1330. The full address is Park House, Park Square West, Leeds LS1 2PW.

Spire: a year on

Spire Healthcare has set out its progress on implementing recommendations to improve patient safety a year after it published the findings of Verita's governance review of two of its hospitals. The governance review of Spire Parkway and Little Aston hospitals was triggered by concerns about the practice of consultant breast surgeon Mr Ian Paterson.

Spire's chief executive Rob Roger said that Verita's report – which was accepted in full and welcomed by the Spire board – made for “difficult reading”. However, Spire made a public commitment to learn any lessons and to implement the 15 recommendations across its network of 39 hospitals.

Verita's recommendations were aimed at spotting and taking action against poor practice and behaviour earlier, and improving monitoring of practising privileges. Recommendations were also made to address shortcomings in Spire's patient recall process.

Involving service users

Members of Verita's mental health advisory group have already supported our investigative work by developing service-user focus groups and collecting patient stories.

Going forward, members of the group will work with the Verita team on mental health projects and reviews, adding valuable insight by sharing their knowledge and personal experiences.

Verita senior consultant Geoff Brennan comments: "In ensuring that our services are effective, it is fundamental that we include the voices of service users. Representatives from our mental health advisory group will bring real value to our work."