

Verita Newsletter Issue 26 – Autumn



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Ed's welcome

Summer 2015 has been eventful. We are proud to have been awarded a contract by The British Council to review its complaints, and to be reappointed by the Lottery Forum to provide its independent complaint review service. We plan to build on our growing reputation in this specialist area over the next year.

At the same time as winning new contracts and developing new services, we have continued work on a number of high-profile investigations. We've been investigating concerns about an immigration removal centre operated by Serco plc and concluding a governance review covering the commissioning, leadership and management of learning disability services across the country. We have also been investigating governance arrangements at Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust following the abuse of young patients by a paediatric consultant haematologist.

We've also seen some important changes to our team. Amber Sargent has been promoted from assistant director to director, and we have said thank you and farewell to former partners Lesley Sargeant, Derek Mechen and former director Tariq Hussain. We wish them all well.

With best wishes

Ed Marsden
Managing partner

Building an open culture

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges' Council invited Verita to contribute to its discussions in September about how to build an open and supportive environment.

Managing partner Ed Marsden and associate director Stephanie Bown spoke at the policy-development event chaired by the academy's chair Professor Dame Sue Bailey and attended by presidents and representatives of colleges and faculties across the UK.

Ed and Stephanie presented data on learning from mistakes based on 116 Verita investigations involving mental health, acute and primary care trusts. Ed explains: *"Having provided a top-level summary of the findings from recent cases, we drilled down in to three specific investigations involving doctors in difficulty to explore some of the challenges of building an open and supportive environment."*

The Verita presentation led to an energetic discussion about organisational and individual themes that characterise supportive working environments and individual and collective resilience.

The session concluded with the academy proposing to work with colleges to agree their respective roles in supporting members to achieve positive cultural change.

Verita wins British Council contract

The British Council has awarded Verita a three-year contract to provide its independent complaints review service.

The British Council operates in over 100 countries, building cultural relations between the UK and the rest of the world through arts, education and society programmes.

Verita consultant Jess Heinemann says: *“As a charity and non-departmental public body, The British Council has a duty to ensure that its complaints process is fair and transparent. It chose Verita because of our reputation for independence and treating people fairly.*

“With such diverse operations, we expect to deal with complainants from a wide range of individuals and organisations, many of whom may be unfamiliar with the complaints process. Our goal is to satisfy all parties with well-judged resolutions.”

Barts commissions serious incident training

Barts Health NHS Trust has commissioned Verita to train members of its governance team in systematic incident investigation.

Verita director and head of training Chris Brougham comments: *“Systematic incident investigation training is always well received by managers and clinicians. Our pragmatic approach helps them understand the relevance to their day-to-day practices and how adopting a standard approach improves the quality of investigations, making it more likely that they reach the right conclusions.”*

Verita’s systematic incident investigation training programme covers theory and process, as well as conducting the investigation itself. It also covers a range of analytical tools and their practical application.

The training programme will run until April 2016.

For more information please contact Chris Brougham on 0113 357 1330.

Managing volunteers better

The National Association of Voluntary Services Managers (NAVSM) invited Kate Lampard and managing partner Ed Marsden to speak at its annual training seminar held in Birmingham in September.

Ed and Kate spoke about the management of volunteers in the light of last year's report on the lessons from the NHS Savile investigations.

The [lessons learned report](#) identified poor regulation and management of volunteers as a potential risk to patients, staff, visitors and volunteers themselves.

Ed comments: "The NHS already relies heavily on volunteers, with numbers increasing year on year. They do a great job, but it's the NHS' responsibility to put in place systems to ensure they are properly managed. This is particularly important for those NHS trusts planning to increase their volunteer workforce by up to 25 per cent. Backing from the board is also essential: board members need to understand the risks and reassure themselves that measures are in place to keep hospitals safe for everyone that uses them."

Olivia Butterworth from NHS England also spoke at the seminar, the only national training event for voluntary services managers in the NHS. She supported Verita's call for NHS voluntary services to be accredited by organisations such as NAVSM.

For photos from the day visit our [Twitter page](#) and for a copy of Ed and Kate's presentation visit NAVSM's [website](#).

Lottery Forum opts for Verita

The Lottery Forum has reappointed Verita to provide its independent complaints review service for another three years.

Verita's senior consultant Kieran Seale comments: *"We are delighted to have been reappointed to do this work. We believe that the process that the Lottery Forum has put in place, culminating with an independent review, gives a real robustness to its complaints processes. It also allows its members to gain an objective perspective on complaints and to learn lessons so that they can improve their internal processes."*

The Lottery Forum consists of seven distributors of lottery funds that have signed up to a common customer service charter and complaints process.

The forum includes the Arts Council, Big Lottery Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund and Sport England.

Verita has provided the independent complaints service to the Lottery Forum since 2010.

We will be publishing some learning about methodology from our independent complaints review team over the coming weeks.

Lessons learned diagnostic

Verita is launching its lessons learned diagnostic tool at a trust in the Midlands. The tool helps trusts to identify strengths and weaknesses in their systems for learning from serious incidents.

Despite a wealth of national guidance dating back more than ten years, many trusts still struggle to implement sustainable solutions following a serious incident.

Verita director Chris Brougham explains: *“When conducting independent investigations and subsequent follow ups, we often find that trusts are unclear about whether improvements have been implemented or not. The reasons for this are multifaceted. Sometimes the investigation itself has been inadequate resulting in the failure to identify the cause or causes of the incident. On other occasions recommendations are not SMART or insufficient importance is given to the need to win the hearts and minds of those responsible for implementing change resulting in short-lived improvements.”*

The diagnostic takes two days to complete, prompts discussion and requires limited preparation for staff taking part.

For more information please contact Chris Brougham on 0113 357 1330 or chrisbrougham@verita.net.

Verita sponsors major exhibition

Verita is proud to sponsor the Foundling Museum's latest acclaimed exhibition, The Fallen Woman.

The exhibition brings together art and historical items that show how a 'fallen' woman was portrayed at a time when sexual respectability was highly valued. It focuses on women's applications to the Foundling Hospital to admit their children. The hospital changed its admission policy in the 19th century so that only previously respectable women who had 'fallen' could petition for their children to be accepted.

Works on show include those by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Richard Redgrave, George Frederic Watts and Thomas Faed. A specially commissioned sound installation by musician and composer Steve Lewinson brings the women's voices to life.

The exhibition has received a resounding reception from both [critics](#) and the public. If you are interested in visiting please see <http://www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk/> for details and opening hours. It runs until 3 January 2016.