

Verita Newsletter Issue 27 – Winter 2016



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Ed's welcome

Recent analysis from the King's Fund forecasts that NHS trusts in England are on course for a net deficit of £2.3bn. In these financially challenging times for healthcare, getting investigations and reviews right the first time, learning from them and assuring the resilience of services is ever more important.

We have seen an increase in demand for Verita's training services. Our systematic incident investigation programme is now CPD accredited and our maternity work acts upon Baroness Cumberlege's recommendation on multi-professional working. We have developed and launched a programme to help break down barriers between midwives, obstetricians and other professionals to deliver personalised care for women and their babies.

Our [complaints management service](#) offering consultancy, diagnostics, outsourcing and training, to a range of sectors is continuing to grow. Off the back of our successful breakfast round table discussion on safeguarding we will host similar events in London and Leeds across April. These events will focus on complaints and being open and transparent. Please get in touch for more information.

With best wishes

Ed Marsden
Managing partner

CPD training accreditation

Verita's popular systematic incident investigation training course has been accredited by The CPD Certification Service. CPD (Continuing Professional Development) accreditation reflects the high standard of the course and its value in maintaining knowledge, skills and ongoing development.

Verita director [Chris Brougham](#) explains: "Every day millions of people are treated safely in the NHS. But when incidents do happen, patients and NHS staff deserve to have them investigated in a timely manner so that the facts and evidence are established early and steps are put in place to prevent the same incident occurring again. Many trusts need to strengthen their investigative capacity. Ensuring that key clinicians and managers are trained in systematic incident investigation techniques using root cause analysis is a recognised way to do this."

Chris adds: "Our course gives delegates the confidence to carry out robust, proportionate investigations and trusts an investigative framework that ensures consistency."

We have seen a large increase in the sale of the [one-day training course](#) over the last six months as NHS trusts look to ensure that they are 'incident ready'. If you would like to find out more please contact Chris Brougham on 0113 357 1330, [@chris_verita](#) or chrisbrougham@verita.net.

Serco immigration removal centre investigation

[Kate Lampard](#) and Verita managing partner [Ed Marsden's report](#) into the culture and practices at Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre was published by Serco in January.

The independent investigation found that there is not an endemic culture of abuse nor a hidden problem of inappropriate behaviour by staff at the centre. However, it did find serious concerns with staffing arrangements including capacity, training and an inadequate proportion of female officers to care for women at the centre.

Ed Marsden explains: "Our investigation highlighted both the challenges of running Yarl's Wood and the concerns and experiences of the residents living there whilst their immigration applications are processed. We identified a number of areas that are in need of improvement, from the choice and quality of food available to residents to the availability of meaningful activities and education programmes for residents."

Kate Lampard says: "Our principal concerns are about staffing levels and staffing arrangements at the centre. We made 35 recommendations aimed at addressing our concerns and we expect that, when implemented, these recommendations will ensure improved care of residents and support of staff at Yarl's Wood."

Kate and Ed have been invited to return to Yarl's Wood in October 2016 to assess progress made against the report's recommendations.

Verita's [organisational resilience diagnostic tool](#) will be implemented to assist with this assessment.

First breakfast seminar

Verita partner [Barry Morris](#) and associate [Lucy Scott-Moncrieff](#) hosted the first of a series of Verita breakfast seminars in early February. The first event covered safeguarding children in the NHS.

Barry and Lucy opened the event with an overview of the learning from their [review](#) of governance arrangements at Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust where a senior doctor, Myles Bradbury, had manipulated hospital systems to enable him to abuse young boys in his care.

Barry Morris said: “Although our recommendations are not a blue print for all providers, some apply to all. Health providers have a responsibility to detect unusual patterns of staff behaviour and to give patients information about what is normal in terms of physical examinations and the frequency of appointments. It is also important to empower patients – and their parents – through education to ask questions, challenge and raise concerns.”

Delegates, who included medical directors, directors of nursing and safeguarding leads from provider and commissioning organisations, were invited to exchange ideas and experiences about safeguarding. The discussion covered poorly designed chaperone policies, whether a competent child’s wish not to have a chaperone should be overridden and the importance of taking a considered and proportionate response to an extreme case. Delegates agreed that open conversations with and among clinicians about safeguarding was important.

Verita’s next breakfast seminar will be on complaints and being open and transparent. It will take place in London and Leeds in early April. For more information please contact Laura Conlon on 020 7494 5670 or lauraconlon@verita.net.

Maternity care: safe choices

Verita has been working with a large maternity unit in a newly merged trust to help the maternity team achieve the right balance between accommodating an individual woman's preferences with the best interests of mother and baby.

Verita associate director [Stephanie Bown](#) explains: "Having a baby is a natural process but a risky one. Conflicts between the mother's choice and a safe choice arise and can be challenging to resolve. Our goal has been to create a culture that promotes learning and improvement and breaks down organisational, geographical and professional boundaries. We are working with the trust to develop birthing protocols for consistent, personalised, professional, woman-centred, safe care."

The work has involved ensuring that women have access to the information they need to make informed decisions about their care, and that takes into account their personal needs and circumstances. The Verita team has provided a refresher on the regulatory context for obstetricians and midwives, tools to enhance shared decision-making between obstetricians, midwives and women and guidance on the use of robust documentation to demonstrate sound decision-making processes and appropriate standards of care.

Verita has spoken with people involved in both regional and national maternity reviews. Baroness Cumberlege's recently published national maternity review recommends breaking down barriers between midwives, obstetricians and other professionals by ensuring that those who work together, train together. It is likely that the issues faced by this trust resonate with maternity units across the country.

If you would like to find out how we can help your maternity team please contact Stephanie Bown on 020 7494 5670 or stephaniebown@verita.net.

Arab Health 2016

Two partners from Verita attended the Arab Health Exhibition and Congress in Dubai in January to catch up with clients and friends in the region, attend the official launch of UKIHMA (the United Kingdom International Healthcare Management Association) and promote our international offers.

The scale and scope of the congress is unlike anything seen in the UK, with some 4,000 exhibitors and over 130,000 delegates. These numbers place it a close second, to Medica in Dusseldorf, in the ranking of largest healthcare gatherings.

Verita partner [Peter Killwick](#) comments: “We were very encouraged by the interest generated by the UKIHMA launch on the United Kingdom Trade and Investment stand. UKIHMA was created with the specific remit of promoting UK healthcare expertise overseas. As a founder member, the level of interest from the many visitors from the Middle East and beyond gives us at Verita confidence that we will expand our international operations in the coming months.”

Verita is delighted to learn that the King’s College Hospital Clinic in Abu Dhabi, an exhibitor at the congress, continues to go from strength to strength and has plans to expand across the region. As Verita’s first ever client in Abu Dhabi, we will continue to watch its progress with interest.

Boost for UK healthcare expansion overseas

Verita has signed up as a founder member of the UK International Healthcare Management Association (UKIHMA).

UKIHMA's mission is to share, promote and grow the capability of UK providers to win contracts to manage healthcare services overseas. It has been set up by a group of pioneering public and private sector organisations committed to innovative and collaborative approaches to international business expansion.

UKIHMA members include consultants, architects, lawyers, human resources experts, outsourcing specialists and a number of high-profile trusts and umbrella organisations. The group as a whole provides a 'one stop shop' for any organisation either considering international expansion from the UK or for overseas commissioners looking for the assurance of quality and excellence of the UK brand.

Verita partner Peter Killwick says: "We are delighted to join such an innovative and well composed group. The initial meetings have shown an impressive unity of intention and values, so we look forward to working with our new partners to promote UK healthcare wherever we can."

Services offered will range from developing the underlying strategy and rationale for projects, the design and build of facilities, financing these facilities and then operating the services to the required standards.

New complaints management service

Verita has launched a [complaints management service](#) to help organisations across healthcare, higher education, business to government and the third sector improve their handling of complaints.

Effective complaint handling is a key component of providing a good quality service and a major reputational issue for any organisation. Verita offers a wide range of services that improve the way our clients manage complaints, from consultancy and diagnostics to training and outsourcing.

Verita senior consultant [Kieran Seale](#) says: “Handling complaints well takes a great deal of time, effort and skill. The growth of social media means that organisations have to tread ever more carefully when it comes to handling complaints. Our investigative experience allows us to get to the bottom of tricky complaints and offer independent assessment to complainants and organisations.”

Verita provides an independent complaints review service to the British Council and the Lottery Forum (a body made up of many of organisations funded by the National Lottery, including the Big Lottery Fund, the Arts Council England and Sport England). This role involves picking up issues after they have been reviewed internally, to give a fresh, independent perspective on individual complaints. This experience, alongside our work with the NHS in clearing backlogs and quality assuring complaints processes and procedures, enables us to provide organisations with the skills and knowledge required to improve their handling of complaints.

If you would like to know more about Verita’s complaints offer, please contact Kieran Seale on 020 7494 567 5670, [@kieran_verita](#) or kieranseale@verita.net.