



## Innovative working practices

Paul Fairhurst

**With pressure on public finances, organisations are looking to find innovative working practices to save money. Capital Ambition asked IES to explore how some London Boroughs (sometimes with local NHS organisations) are sharing professionals or teams across organisational boundaries. This might happen through the sharing of an individual (eg joint head of HR), sharing of a team (joint HR function) or through procurement of services from another authority.**

### In this issue

- 2 IDeA: Organisational redesign web resource
- 3 The Career Paths of NHS Chief Executives
- 4 Building an HR strategy

### Working together

IES provides a unique evidence-based consultancy service for clients in the private, public and voluntary sectors:

- Our experts can assist with facilitating new strategies linked to business needs.
- We provide rigorous and independent auditing, evaluation and diagnosis.
- We have extensive experience of designing practical policies and processes.
- We can help you build organisational capability and develop your HR people.

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[www.ieshr.co.uk](http://www.ieshr.co.uk)

Based on a series of case studies, IES developed 'An evolving guide to shared professionals'\* that considers and draws on experience of these arrangements working across local government and the NHS, as well as just within local government. It could equally apply to other sharing arrangements within the public sector (or even private sector). The guide explores why organisations might consider arrangements for sharing professionals, the types of benefits that may be available depending on the route taken, and the actions that have made these arrangements successful in different situations. It is planned to add to the list of case studies as the project progresses and update this guide as new lessons are learned.

It is clear from the work that these kinds of arrangements can and do work, delivering financial, service and partnership working benefits. However, it is also apparent that they may not be right for all situations and roles, and that they need careful thought and focused execution to ensure their success and avoid some of the potential pitfalls. Sharing professionals can be a sensible response to a short-term problem that yields useful benefits, especially in reducing costs. As some of the case studies show, you can go beyond this point, consolidating the benefits, but extending the model so that it permits a



more strategic solution. Usually the latter is the movement towards greater organisational integration. This will only be successful if the primary goal (and this may no longer be cost but service harmonisation) is clear, and determined efforts are made to reach it.

There are challenges to be faced in the tactical sharing of professionals, but these become more pronounced as integration becomes the aim. Good preparation and execution of the necessary staff work remains, but the requirement to have proper governance arrangements in place becomes vital. Significant effort can be put into attempting to implement approaches such as these described here but, with limited

*Continued on page 4*

# IDeA: Organisational redesign web resource

Duncan Brown

## Evaluating Executive Coaching Skills

The Board Development Team at the NHS Institute has commissioned IES to evaluate their Executive Coaching Skills programme. Adopted by all ten Strategic Health Authorities, this programme aims to develop a community of senior leaders into executive coaches who, once trained, will provide coaching to emerging leaders and targeted under-represented groups in the NHS – including clinical, black and minority ethnic, and women. Our evaluation framework will examine the effectiveness of the programme in a number of ways: the process of delivery; the impact on senior leader participants; the impact on coaching clients; the impact on NHS organisations; and the return on investment of the programme for the NHS.

For more details contact Alison Carter

## Retention of Black and Minority Ethnic and Female Police Officers

Over recent years, the police service has worked hard to increase the recruitment of Black and minority ethnic (BME) and female officers, and would like to maximise the retention of such officers. Recent evidence indicates, however, that the rates of voluntary resignation for female and BME officers are significantly higher. The Home Office has commissioned IES to carry out a research project to provide more information on how the retention of female and BME officers could be increased in the police service in England and Wales. Among the issues that the research is expected to address are why female and BME officers leave the force, particularly in the first five years of service; and what police forces are doing to improve their retention. More widely, the research is expected to also provide in-depth information on why officers have left the force, and thereby contribute to the development of interventions that could help improve retention in the future.

For more details contact Nii Djan Tackey

**With severely declining resources yet increasing service demand, many councils are considering how to reduce costs while preserving key front-line services. Yet the history of re-structuring efforts to achieve this is not a particularly positive one.**

The Improvement and Development Agency, together with Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands therefore commissioned IES to help them develop a new knowledge base and resource to support councils in undertaking successful organisational redesign. National Adviser Workforce Strategy Joan Munro and Project Co-ordinator Georgina Siddall worked with the IES team to scope out the requirement and then to gather and produce the material.



Based on practical experience and research, the web-based resource sets out key issues for councillors and senior managers, good practice examples, and detailed advice for HR staff. It combines primary research in the form of a number of original case studies from councils around the country, with summaries and learning points drawn from leading academic thinking and research on what makes for success in this type of change process. Visit this resource to see how organisations can achieve successful and sustainable change.

[www.idea.gov.uk/organisationalredesign](http://www.idea.gov.uk/organisationalredesign)

IES will be helping IDeA with a launch event in Birmingham in May. For details contact [duncan.brown@employment-studies.co.uk](mailto:duncan.brown@employment-studies.co.uk)

## Recently published

**The HR Agenda for 2010: Ten top trends as we come out of recession**, Garrow V (ed.)

**Report 472**, Institute for Employment Studies (IES), 2010. ISBN 978-1-85184-426-5. £30.00

The HR team at IES has been reflecting on some of the priorities we see for organisations as they start to emerge from recession and look to the future. In these short articles our topic leaders provide insights that have emerged from our own recent consultancy and research practice across the public and private sector.

Has your organisation addressed the following priorities?

- the critical role of effective workforce planning and OD as organisations face up to continuing future uncertainty
- the importance of new forms of flexible working, which have moved from being essentially an employee-oriented benefit to a valuable flexible resourcing and cost control strategy
- the future for learning and development, talent management and coaching, as the need for top talent and leadership is greater than ever, but the cost spotlight



has fallen on the justification for some common, traditional training practices and spend

- how recession has highlighted the importance of employee engagement to organisational performance, but also in some cases weakened the strength of employer/employee relationships
- the need for line managers to practice in reality the rhetoric of total rewards and best-place-to-work initiatives
- the requirement to respond to the generational challenges presented by demographic change – managing both ‘the teenies’ and ‘the oldies’.

[www.employment-studies.co.uk/pubs](http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/pubs)

# The Career Paths of NHS Chief Executives

Linda Barber

**Chief executives, amongst other UK leaders, have recently come under sharp criticism for being self-centred and not abashed about awarding themselves bumper bonuses during the economic downturn. However, IES research for NHS Yorkshire and Humber (NHS Y&H) revealed that chief executives in their organisations were clearly driven by wanting to make a difference to others: a welcome antidote to the popular negative press.**

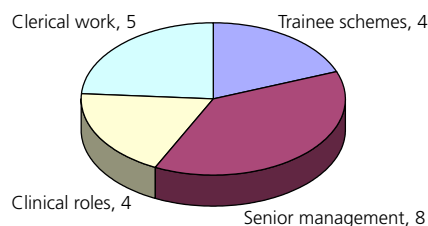
IES explored the career paths of current chief executives who had made it to the top in the NHS to:

- make visible the multiple and diverse routes to becoming a chief executive in the NHS – to illustrate that one size does not fit all
- identify the key career-enabling factors and other pivotal experiences that they experienced along their own personal career journeys
- gather career insights and practical examples both to inspire and guide the future senior management pipeline
- promote wider understanding within the existing chief executive community about each other, and enhance existing networks and relationships.

An online survey was completed by chief executives, followed by telephone interviews to probe aspects of their careers in greater depth. The research revealed very interesting and diverse personal accounts from some

very self-aware leaders and showed there is no single 'best' route (see figure).

## Diverse entry routes into the NHS (21 chief executives)



Source: IES, 2009

Chief executives candidly revealed what makes them 'tick' by offering their views, advice and personal insights to help others navigate their own careers in the NHS. These insights clustered around the six key themes (see figure below), underpinned by the need to be ethical and transparent. Five relate to 'being' a chief executive and the sixth concerns 'how' to become one.

## Key headlines

- NHS leaders need to be true to themselves and have strong personal values.
- All sorts of people can become NHS leaders with many different kinds of career paths.
- Aspiring chief executives need personal development support, challenging work and a range of career experiences along their journeys.

For more about this research contact Linda Barber ([linda.barber@employment-studies.co.uk](mailto:linda.barber@employment-studies.co.uk)) who designed and delivered the research, or search 'chief executives' on our website.

## briefings

### A Coaching Evaluation Toolkit

IES is developing an evaluation toolkit for a national coaching scheme. The aim is to enable the scheme co-ordinators to evaluate at three different levels on an on-going basis: Effectiveness of the coach and the coaching (did the coaching work?); Impact on individual coaching clients and their organisations (what was done as a result of the coaching provided?); and Return on Investment (what was the value of the coaching provided through the scheme?)

For more details contact Alison Carter

### Relocation support

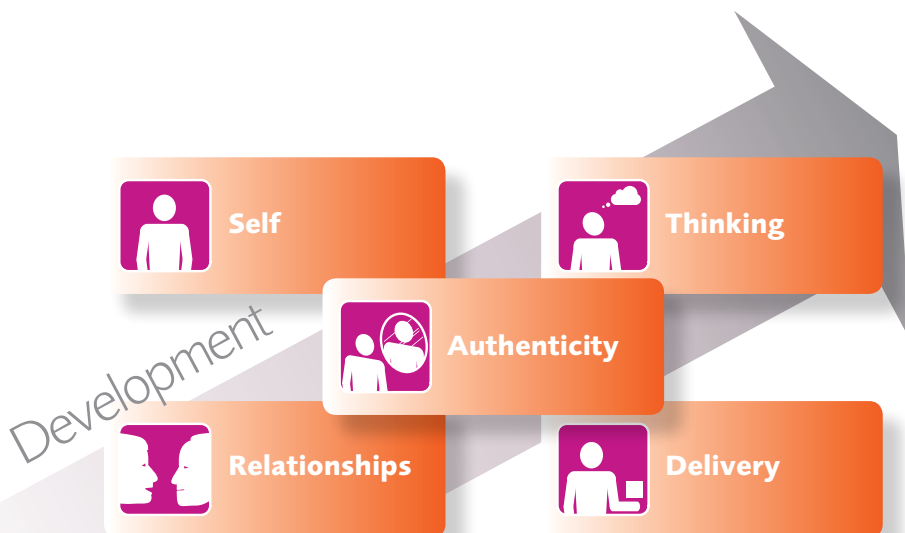
IES is working with the Health and Safety Executive to evaluate the 'How and Where We Work' Programme, designed to support staff through the move to a single headquarters in Redgrave Court, Bootle. The evaluation is in the form of a case study, describing the background to the programme and the outcomes and drawing on qualitative data from focus group discussions and interviews with key stakeholder groups to explore the experience and perceived success of the programme.

For more details contact Valerie Garrow

### Evaluation of Academy for Large Scale Change

IES was appointed to evaluate 'The Academy for Large Scale Change' designed by the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement in order to equip Strategic Health Authorities, and regional and national leaders, with world class improvement and change skills. The evaluation is primarily formative and is based on systemic action inquiry, which employs multiple methods of data collection throughout the programme to provide continuous feedback loops. The evaluation is therefore an integral part of the programme and learning process.

For more details contact Valerie Garrow



# Building an HR strategy

Peter Reilly

aroundIES

**IES has been working with a couple of organisations (The Housing Ombudsman Service and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport) on their HR strategy.**

In the case of the Housing Ombudsman Service, we were asked to support the annual business planning process by facilitating the development of the people strand of the five year strategy. This included a review of existing people strategies and policies, discussion with directors and managers, and proposal of alternative approaches from IES's experience, as well as a prioritisation session with the senior management team. The key to the project's success was to link the people strategies clearly to the business priorities.

For the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) we helped formulate a new people strategy against a tight deadline. Using inputs from staff focus groups and the organisational vision, values and business strategy, we worked together with the HR team to put together a slide pack for the Executive Committee's sign-off. The people strategy was structured under six themes (like leadership and reward) that linked together the business drivers and principles with the strategies and actions.

In implementing the People Strategy, DCMS recognises and understands how much time and effort will need to be invested in order to embed the strategy into the DNA of the organisation. Subsequent work, involving IES, has been going on to set up a series of measures to judge whether the people strategy is being effective or not across each of the themes. This distinguishes between input measures and people management and business outcomes. This is a very helpful discipline in that it forces you to think through what you are trying to achieve and to detail the stages by which it is evident whether you are succeeding or not. So, say you train managers in the performance appraisal process, that is a useful input; but you need to see employees more focused on business priorities to observe an outcome that should lead to improved organisational performance.

These sets of metrics are being signed off by business champions so that the leadership is engaged with and endorses the work of the HR team.

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resources it is essential that value is delivered. This may require significant cultural change and involve disruption to those who are actually making the decisions. These ideas will only work if all the partners have the required commitment – it's easy to talk about transformation when it involves other people.

The work also raised some questions. Should any change be organic with ad hoc linking up of services, or should there be

some scenario planning around a more considered approach to reconfiguring service delivery? There is perhaps the opportunity to undertake some 'what if' modelling around changing operating models to see how these could potentially reduce cost and improve service delivery, before starting down an implementation path based purely on short-term, reactive thinking.

\* [www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/capitalambition/projects/workforcestrategy/sharedprofessionals.htm](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/capitalambition/projects/workforcestrategy/sharedprofessionals.htm)



IES, Brighton

## Have you considered the IES HR Network?

The IES HR Network combines membership of a select community with access to up-to-the-minute research carried out by one of the UK's foremost employment research institutes. Corporate membership is only open to those organisations that will both gain from membership and also contribute to the collective success of the community.

Whether you are under pressure to achieve even more with fewer resources, or seeking to create an HR function that really adds value, the combination of the knowledge from research and the insights from the shared community will provide a stimulating, solid base on which to build. This network of leading-edge professionals has exclusive seminars and conferences, access to IES experts, involvement in shared research and a members-only knowledge base.

To find out more go to:

[www.employment-studies.co.uk/network/](http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/network/)



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