

# Big Splash

Information for NHS IMAS members



Welcome to the latest edition of **Big Splash**, the newsletter for NHS IMAS members.

**Big Splash** has the latest news about the NHS IMAS programme and assignments.

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## NHS IMAS: Supporting you through the transition

Since the last issue of Big Splash, the Government has published the White Paper – “Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS” which sets out the future direction for the NHS. We have all now had the chance to digest the information and start to think about the implications for our organisations.

As we start to gain clarity around the proposed changes ahead and to consider transition plans, there may be areas which require additional support or expertise. Don't forget that NHS IMAS has access to over 100 experienced senior NHS managers and clinicians in our talent pool, who are eager to share their knowledge and skills.

As well as providing interim support for any vacancies, we have experts that can assist you in a number of areas such as:

- Review of financial plans
- Applications for Foundation Trust Status
- Review of CIP plans for Foundation Trust preparation
- Fit for Purpose Reviews
- Establishing Programme Management Offices
- Executive coaching

NHS IMAS saves money for the NHS. We do so by providing a solution that allows the NHS to reduce dependency on private sector consultancies. We are currently managing over 40 assignments at any one time and saving the NHS over £100,000 per month when compared against the cost of using independent sector healthcare consultancies.

As a key stakeholder you will be aware that the core team manage all assignments from the initial enquiry through to the evaluation. Evaluating the assignment and gathering feedback from the client is an essential and fundamental part of our process. We use this feedback to build on our success and further improve the service we offer to organisations.

If you would like support from NHS IMAS or know colleagues who would, please contact a member of the core team to discuss your requirements on (0113) 254 6464/6424 or e-mail [nhs.imas@nhs.net](mailto:nhs.imas@nhs.net).

# Life on a NHS IMAS Assignment

**This month we hear from pool member Jo Farrar about his experiences as the Interim Director of Finance and Procurement at an acute Trust.**

“This was my first NHS IMAS assignment. I was made aware of the role through the NHS IMAS team and recognised immediately that it was fantastic opportunity for me. At the time I was considering my next career move and looking for opportunities to gain operational experience. The timing couldn't have been better.

## **Agreeing the brief**

Before taking on the role and agreeing the brief I spoke with and met a number of key individuals, such as the outgoing Director of Finance, the Chair of the Audit Committee, Director of Finance and Performance at the SHA, and Director of Finance at the PCT. This allowed me to build up a picture of the organisation, the health economy within which it operates, and what would be expected of me and us during my six month assignment.

It became apparent relatively early on that the Trust and health economy faced significant challenges many of which were known and understood. Others were emerging and yet to be fully quantified and, where possible, mitigated.

It was vital that I knew where we were at the outset so that I could quickly develop a sense of what needed to be done, whether or not we would need help and, if so, where that help would come from. I quickly refined my initial view and developed a realistic set of objectives which I agreed with the Chief Executive, the Chair, and the SHA.

## **Delivery**

As this was my first Director of Finance role, and a relatively complex situation, I felt quite exposed to begin with.



Jo Farrar

However, it became apparent early on that there was support out there if required and if I asked for it. This could come from colleagues within the trust, the SHA, and personal networks.

I also asked NHS IMAS to help corroborate my view of the financial position of the trust, which they did very quickly. This was fundamental to helping me prioritise what to focus on.

I also needed to understand the fitness for purpose of aspects of the trust's finance function. Recognising we didn't have the capacity to do this for ourselves I again turned to NHS IMAS for help. Guy Musson, NHS IMAS Partner, reviewed the budgeting and reporting processes, and also acted as a great sounding board and source of support over the course of the assignment. Throughout the assignment I prioritised keeping the key stakeholders appraised of where we were, where we were headed, and whether we were still on track to deliver the revised plan. By keeping them effectively informed and free from surprises they were able to help me in my cause.

**Continued on to next page...**

*“Personally I found this NHS IMAS assignment one of the most developmental and rewarding experiences of my career to date.”*

### Was it a success?

As far as the Trust is concerned, we delivered our revised plan. However, there is a lot more to it than that. Many people and organisations, NHS IMAS included, played an important part in moving the trust on and beginning to put it on a firmer footing.

Personally I found this NHS IMAS assignment one of the most developmental and rewarding experiences of my career to date. It gave me a fantastic opportunity to gain operational experience, learn how to manage complex issues in difficult situations, and realise the fundamental importance of forging good relationships in delivering a plan and getting the job done.

### Key lessons learned

- **Know your starting point** – talk to a number of people and draw on a range of information sources to confirm your view
- **Identify and build a relationships with key people** – they will need to have confidence in what you are doing and should be able to help you

- **Form a view of what is and isn't a priority** – It's very easy to either become overwhelmed by the scale of what needs to be done or try and do everything. Identify the small number of things that will make the biggest difference and focus on their delivery
- **Honestly assess your (personal and organisational) capacity and capability to deliver the brief** – where there are gaps identify what support you need
- **You're not alone** – if you need help ask for it
- **Let people know how you're getting on** – keep them informed and manage expectations – people don't like surprises

## ECIST in the news!

The Health Service Journal (HSJ) recently highlighted the hard work of the Emergency Care Intensive Support Team (ECIST) with an article highlighting that they have been used by 71 NHS Trusts since being established in April 2009.

The team assists Trusts with Emergency Care challenges by reviewing how pathways work as part of the local health community and sharing best practice.

Phil Milligan, Director of Operations at Worcester Acute Hospitals Trust which invited the team in said: "their headline is patient experience".

Dr Ian Sturgess, one of the clinical leads for ECIST reflected that the team are about "using the experience and expertise within the NHS to support the NHS".

## NHS IMAS products *in the spotlight*

A different product from the NHS IMAS toolkit will be showcased in each issue of Big Splash to demonstrate the broad range of tools available to you.

We do not claim that these tools are 'best practice', but they are good practice, that we know works as they have been tried and tested elsewhere.

This month, we would like to share the Business Change Strategy template with you, which is intended to help NHS IMAS members describe how an area of business will transform from where it is now to where it needs to be.

It provides details of the strategy to ensure the change initiative is implemented successfully and details how the business processes will change to support the initiative.

The template covers all the areas that need to be considered when producing a business change strategy, including purpose, scope, deliverables, outcomes, challenges, approach and impact analysis.

If you would like a copy of this template or further details on how to use this tool, please contact Gemma Jones at [gemmajones@nhs.net](mailto:gemmajones@nhs.net)

The last NHS IMAS Partner Day was held at BMA House in London during the week of the White Paper publication, so it was timely to discuss 'The Future Direction of NHS IMAS'. Partners came to the following headline conclusions:

- Someone has to do the here and now; the market for intervention and support will increase during the transition period
- There will be an increase in the need for transitional management
- NHS IMAS should anticipate the challenges to the business model and funding
- NHS IMAS should engage with 'top of the house' stakeholders
- NHS IMAS should be part of the solution and our business model should match the new market segmentation i.e.
  - Foundation Trust Development
  - PCT Transition/Commissioning
  - Local Authorities
  - DH/Emergency Planning Framework

At the meeting it was agreed that NHS IMAS should develop a proposition aligned with the White Paper timescales that is focused on quality and outcomes. NHS IMAS should get sign-up from key sponsors to a coherent proposal based on a 3-4 year timescale in order to secure the future of NHS IMAS.

Feedback was provided on the **Clinical Engagement** work that had been undertaken on our behalf, the key findings were:

- NHS IMAS currently has 16 talent pool members with a medical background and we would like to attract an additional four or five quality clinical leaders from each SHA region.

- We are hoping to attract either highly experienced clinical leaders who have recently stepped down from a formal leadership role in their organisation but still have much to offer or
- Relatively young and ambitious clinical leaders looking for experience and challenges to support the development of their career.
- Past NHS IMAS publicity was not targeted to attract clinical leaders and needs to incorporate the kind of assignments which we use clinicians for and explain the practicalities of being on an NHS IMAS assignment.
- NHS IMAS needs to keep in regular contact with the clinicians in the talent pool and manage their expectations about the availability of assignments.
- The scope of the work, lines of authority and accountability must be specified at the start of each assignment and younger clinical leaders will require mentoring support.

The Partners suggested a number of roles that Clinical Leaders in the pool may be able to help with:-

- Mentoring Medical Staff
- Reviewing SUIs
- Supporting the Intensive Support Team

We will also work with the Royal Colleges to explore the possibility of doctors gaining CPD points whilst undertaking NHS IMAS assignments. This would mean that being part of the pool and taking part in development opportunities and assignments not only build on existing skills but would also contribute towards accreditation.

If you are a clinician and interested in becoming a member of our talent pool, please contact us at [nhs.imas@nhs.net](mailto:nhs.imas@nhs.net) or call us on (0113) 2546464/6424.

Do you know of anyone who has the skills to join the NHS IMAS talent pool?

Talent pool members have access to a diverse range of exciting and challenging work opportunities which will help to develop their skills for the future.

We currently have demand for roles in operational management, finance and service redesign.

If you would like further information on the registration process please contact the core team on [nhs.imas@nhs.net](mailto:nhs.imas@nhs.net) / 0113 254 6424



## Quick splash...

**Name...** Keith Prior, NHS IMAS pool member

**I work as...** Interim Operations Director for a large UK Ambulance Service responsible for about 2,400 frontline clinical staff and managers and 61 ambulance stations spread over 5,000sq miles

**My typical day involves....** I usually get to my office for about 7.15am; my first meeting is usually around 7.30am. My day then

normally involves meetings and emails but I do try to get out to some of our Ambulance stations to meet staff fairly regularly. I always try to leave for home at about 5.30pm but it often ends up later!

**The best thing about my job is...** Getting out and about meeting staff.

**Have you been on an NHS IMAS assignment?** Yes, my current role is an assignment.

**Tell us a bit more about it....** The principal part of the role has been turning around response performance as the Trust has been historically underachieving in this area for some time, whilst of course maintaining clinical excellence, quality and financial balance. This meant leading and motivating the team, managing key internal and external relationships especially with local commissioners and the SHA and getting the basics right. The key has been getting managers and staff on board to embrace the required changes and empowering people to make decisions. The Trust has moved from being significantly challenged to one of the best in terms of response times.

**What would be your perfect assignment?** I think I am on it now.

**Word of advice for other pool members...** It is always daunting going to somewhere new but if you believe in yourself and your abilities you will make a difference.

**What do you want to do next? (assignment or career)** My initial 3 month assignment has now been extended to 15 months and I am more than happy to continue to help the Trust to further improve and gain Foundation Trust status.

**If I didn't work for the NHS, I'd....** do something sporty

**In my spare time, I....** enjoy life with my family, play guitar and I am player manager and secretary for my local village football team. I also play five a-side a couple of times a week.



Keith Prior

## Contact us

Please direct any questions regarding the NHS IMAS programme to [nhs.imas@nhs.net](mailto:nhs.imas@nhs.net) or call the core team on 0113 254 6424

If you would like to be included on the Big Splash distribution list or have any ideas for future articles, please contact Gemma on [gemmajones@nhs.net](mailto:gemmajones@nhs.net) or 0113 254 6424