

Volume 5 / Issue 1 2003 (English) - Management

Office for Health Management: Ireland



Author

Denis Doherty

The Office for Health Management was established in June 1997 by the Minister for Health and is funded by the Department of Health and Children.

It emerged following the publication, in 1996, of a Management Development Strategy for the Health and Personal Social Services, which recommended that an office be set up to facilitate implementation of this strategy.

The role of the Office is primarily a facilitative one, to commission management and organisation development programmes on behalf of employers in the health and personal social services.

It recognises that employers have primary responsibility for management and organisation development and the Office intervenes only when a gap is identified in existing service provision

or when a programme is best provided across the health services rather than within individual organisations.

The role of the Office for Health

Management has evolved in the five years since it was established. It first engaged in addressing the priorities identified in the Management Development Strategy. The Office itself then began to identify further development needs that were not being addressed within the system. It was apparent that managers within the system wanted and needed easily accessible development resources that they could use to foster their development as managers. This led to the identification of management competencies and diagnostic tools, guidelines in preparing for interview, e-learning programmes and discussion papers. Other initiatives that the Office led included personal development planning, managing diversity and top and senior executive coaching.

The Office also responds to requests received from the service itself. These requests include management development programmes for specific groups of staff and nurse leadership development.

The Office Way of Working

Consultative steering groups are drawn from throughout the service to guide all strategic initiatives. When clients approach the Office seeking help, the Office works with them to diagnose the problem and devise appropriate solutions. A key part of the Office for Health Management's philosophy is to develop those with whom it works so that the skills and expertise of the Office for Health Management are disseminated throughout the system.



In the future its role will continue to evolve particularly as it assumes responsibility for leading out on

organisation development within the health services. The Office role will be primarily to lead development, evaluate progress and ensure quality is maintained. The role might well be compared to that of an advance scout that looks ahead, reports back to the service and enables it then to develop and change in the light of probable future change. More emphasis is being placed on leading the way as opposed to meeting current needs.

The staff complement of the Office is small, deliberately so, as the Office calls on staff of the health service to participate in projects, steering committees and development programmes.

This has a dual benefit; it ensures that the Office is in constant touch with the needs and issues for health service managers and it provides an opportunity for health service managers to reflect on developmental issues for the service as a whole. The aim is to remain small, devolving initiatives out to the system to be implemented once they have been tried and tested by the Office.

The Activities of the Office

The work of the Office can be divided into three main types of activities, personal, management and organisation development, as set out below.

Personal Development

The Office sees it as important to provide tools and resources to managers throughout the health services to enable them to develop their management skills and competencies. A key part of the work of the Office has been to consciously foster the recognition by managers of their responsibility to develop themselves and their staff on an ongoing basis. Major work in this area includes:

- Personal Development Planning
- Development of Online knowledge centre and website
- E- Learning programmes
- Identification of management competencies
- Mentoring programme
- Newsletters and management guidelines

Management Development

The management development work consists of:

- Leadership programmes
- Development programmes for top and senior managers
- Management development programmes commissioned for specific groups
- Masterclasses
- Lectures

Organisation Development

The role of the Office was expanded under the new health strategy of 2001 to include the facilitation of organisation as well as management development. The existing organisation development work of the Office includes:

- Managing diversity and equal opportunities
- Promoting clinicians in management

- Supporting an organisation development network
- Commissioning research on best practice in change management
- Promoting patient-partnership initiatives
- Acting as a central resource on organisation development

Office Website

The office website contains a digest of the latest health management news, a calendar of OHM events and activities, copies of newsletters, annual reports and published documents, papers and materials from Office Masterclasses and other events. It also includes a Knowledge Centre on personal, management and organisation development.

The website address is: www.officeforhealthmanagement.ie

Published on : Wed, 2 Feb 2005