

# NPAG News

EDITION 41 – December 2009

[www.npag.org.uk](http://www.npag.org.uk)

Issued monthly, **NPAG News** provides information on recent events and forthcoming NPAG activity. Please forward **NPAG News** to all of your colleagues who may have an interest in any of our activities.

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## BENEFITS OF THE NPAG NETWORK

In the last edition of NPAG News (Edition No: 40 – November 2009) we covered the benefits of networking, and in particular the benefits of membership of **NPAG Benchmarking and Best Value Groups**. One of the membership benefits mentioned was use of the **NPAG NetWork**.

The **NPAG NetWork**, which has been in operation since July 2004, provides members with a hub for information exchange. Members' email their questions to the **NPAG NetWork Facilitator**; who in turn disseminates these requests to members across selected, or all, NPAG groups and collates the responses. The use of this service has proved an invaluable benefit for members in sharing documents, information and knowledge – and in **not reinventing the wheel!**

The **NPAG NetWork** is available free of charge to all members of NPAG Benchmarking and Best Value Groups and to individual subscribers. Members of the NPAG's national network of Benchmarking and Best Value Groups form the nucleus of the *NetWork* – providing access to 600 named contacts throughout the NHS, across the UK.

As part of the NPAG's policy of continuous development, the **NPAG NetWork** is being further developed and continues to go from strength to strength.

In the current financial year to November 2009, some **200 requests** have been handled by the **NPAG NetWork** Facilitator based at NPAG's Chelmsford office. In excess of **700 responses** have been received in return, together with over **350 documents** which are now held in the NPAG Library.

Examples of documents provided include the following: -

- Job descriptions / person specifications
- Service level agreements (SLAs)
- Policies
- Procedures
- Guidelines
- Example interview questions
- Audit tools
- Example contract specifications
- Example tender documents
- Patient satisfaction questionnaires
- Service specifications
- Quality standards
- Reports

The NPAG currently facilitates over 20 national Benchmarking and Best Value Groups. These groups cover a diverse range of service areas which include: - Operating Theatres; Facilities; District Nurses; Catering; Occupational Health; EBME (Electro Biomedical Engineering); Sterile Services; Health & Safety & Risk Management and Shared Services Development Network. These illustrate the extent of the contacts available through use of the **NPAG NetWork** to subscribers.

Problems posed and practical advice provided from within the **NPAG NetWork** membership includes the following topics: -

- Maintenance – planned & unplanned
- Extending FM contracts
- District nursing out of hours services
- Taxi usage restrictions
- Royal mail alternatives
- Staff parking, systems and charges
- Waste disposal
- Single use CSSD instruments
- Shifts and shift rotations
- Carbon strategy
- Energy saving
- Management of fixed assets
- Patient dignity
- Business continuity
- Decontamination units
- Referral pathways
- Staff accommodation
- Onsite shops/third party vendors
- Helipads
- Accounts payable
- Tracking/tracing equipment
- Suspicious packages
- Patient bedside systems
- Care & therapy in the home

The success of the **NPAG NetWork** is best illustrated by providing a few examples of expressions of appreciation from its users: -

- *“Thanks – it was a very useful request”*
- *“Thanks. We have already started to contact the companies with the info your responders have provided”*
- *“Thanks. Very happy that I had any replies as it was an odd question”*
- *“This has saved me so much time and effort. Thanks”*
- *“Thanks – it was a very fruitful request”*

Access to the **NPAG NetWork** is currently restricted to members of NPAG Benchmarking and Best Value Groups. As part of our continued development, we are considering an additional membership option for others that, although not able to involve themselves with Benchmarking and Best Value Group membership, would like to benefit from undertaking benchmarking exercises and using the opportunities presented by the **NPAG NetWork**. We anticipate making an announcement about this new development in the New Year.

### **Interested?**

To find out more about the benefits of networking through the NPAG, joining one of our **Benchmarking and Best Value Groups** and the **NPAG NetWork**, please visit the NPAG website: [www.npag.org.uk](http://www.npag.org.uk) or contact Marie, Gemma or Victoria at our office at: **01245 544 600**.

We look forward to hearing from you.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA AND CREATING A STRONG BUSINESS CASE

### Part 4 in our LEAN Series of articles, presented by Alturos in collaboration with the NPAG

Continuing in its series of regular articles by Alturos Director, Dr John Coleman, on 'Lean' in the NHS; this month's focus is on the importance of data and creating a strong business case. An overarching theme and recurring question that emerges from operational staff is 'yes, but will we get permission from senior management to make the changes...?' The answer, overwhelmingly is 'it depends on how strong the evidence and case is for change.'

The value of collecting functional level, qualitative and quantitative data, cannot ever be underestimated. Prior to any Value Stream or Pathway Investigation, operational staff and management should, literally, walk the pathway and gather photographs (clearly with permission and bearing in mind any ethics protocols), forms and paperwork and other qualitative data such as anecdotal stories from staff and patients. This should be complemented by numerical data such as waits and delays for patients, time spent with patients in clinical activities such as diagnostics, tests, assessments, interventions, post-intervention such as therapies and so on.

The VSI will show the 'Current Reality' drawn from this data. But both management and staff must build the business case based on areas such as increasing flow through the system; increasing 'value-adding' time with patients; targeted and evidence-based cost reductions (not global 'slash and burn' budget cuts); costs of any investments and projected pay-back...and so on. These are not necessarily concepts and skills that operational staff in the NHS possess. But investing time in confirming the evidence; and developing sound business cases, is both rewarding for staff and management for 'ownership' in change. Finally it helps strengthen the business skills across any NHS organisation seeking Foundation Trust status.

## NPAG TELECOMMS BEST VALUE GROUP COLLABORATION HELPS DEVELOP NEW 'ON CALL ROTA' APPLICATION

Data Resolve Limited, a small software development company that specialises in working with the NHS has worked collaboratively with Telecommunication Managers in the NPAG group to deliver a solution to the universal problem of 'On Call Rota's' in Acute Hospital Trust's in the UK.

### The Problem:

Paper Rota's descending on NHS Switchboards, across the country, in varying numbers depending on the size of the Trust. Almost certainly all different in the way they are laid out, delivered in a variety of formats from spreadsheets to scraps of paper – often incomplete. Posted, faxed, hand delivered to Switchboards at different times etc. etc.

In most cases these are put into ring binders and every night, the night shift staff trawl through every Rota and manually extract the details of who is 'On Call' for the next 24 hours in each of the Departments and completed a consolidated list by hand.

### The Solution:

**RotaWatch from Data Resolve** – Working closely with Switchboard Staff and Rota Managers, a system has been developed that allows Rota Managers to construct Rota's that look the same as those they currently produce, but in a real time system that eradicates the need for paper. Rota Managers can plan their Rota's as far in advance as they want, simply and efficiently, they can change information with a few clicks of a mouse and, because the information is in a database, they can start to extract meaningful Management Information.

For the Switchboard, there is an automatic real time view created of who is 'On Call Today' for the next 24 hours that can either be printed out or made to run in the background on their Operator Consoles

For other Staff in the Trust, there is an Intranet view that shows who is 'On Call Now', so Staff can source the information themselves, without calling Switchboard.

### **Here and Now:**

NHS Lothian volunteered to be 'first implementers' and Alan Hush (Telecomms Manager) comments:- "Having several year's experience working with Ted Parker, it seemed like a natural progression to approach Data Resolve when we were looking to resolve what had become a huge issue for us, namely the collation and accurate, safe, use of the 174 different Rota's that the Telephonists within NHS Lothian are required to use every day. I had flagged the potential of an error in calling the wrong Rota participant as a Clinical Risk to the organisation and that the likelihood of causing, at least, a delay in contacting a crucial staff-member in the event of a patient being in a critical condition is unacceptable. Having used Data Resolve's Internal On-line Directory solution for some time, we were sure that Ted and his Team would be able to assist with our requirements. The integration with our Voice Activated Directory service will improve efficiency and allow general users to ascertain who is on-call for the various services, and reduce the number of calls to our Telephonists".

Version 1.0 of 'RotaWatch' was finalised at the beginning of October 2009 and to date 5 systems have been deployed, however the interest amongst all Telecomms Staff that have seen the system is 100% positive.

Ted Parker, a Director of Data Resolve says:- "We are delighted with the support we have received from Trusts to help us develop this small application which has such a big impact at ground level"

### **The Future:**

Data Resolve is confident that the results for Switchboard Staff are excellent.

Whilst a lot of effort has gone into making the system very user friendly for Rota Managers it is expected that Version 1.1 will follow on shortly and will include further improvements based on feedback from this group.

In addition, discussions are taking place with IVR providers to make 'On Call' information available via their systems currently in place at Trust's.

A variation of 'RotaWatch' is being developed for the Dental Service in Scotland

### **Conclusion:**

Genuine customer driven software application development really does work.

### **EBME (North) BEST VALUE GROUP**

The first meeting of the next annual round of the NPAG's EBME (North) Best value Group is on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2010 in Rochdale. For full details of the future plans of this BVG please contact the NPAG office, Email [marie@npag.org.uk](mailto:marie@npag.org.uk) or telephone **01245 544 600**

### **NHS EFFICIENCY IN PRIMARY AND COMMUNITY CARE - NEW REPORT LAUNCHED BY THE CBI, 16 DECEMBER 2009**

The current financial situation poses big challenges but also opportunities for NHS commissioners and providers. To contribute to the debate, the CBI's new report 'Doing more with less: Improving health outcomes' examines how NHS primary and community care services are being re-engineered across England to deliver efficiency savings, while maintaining and improving the quality of care for patients. It shows how using competition and choice ensures the best provider is selected to run services that are focused on prevention, early diagnosis and treatment closer to home. The report will be launched before an expert panel and audience at a breakfast event in central London on Wednesday 16 December between 0830h and 1030h.

Please [register online](#) (password: cbievent) or contact [chris.heathcote@cbi.org.uk](mailto:chris.heathcote@cbi.org.uk)

## SNIPPETS

### Frontline NHS Staff to help transform patient care

On 20th November 2009 – Social Enterprise day - Phil Hope, Care Services Minister announced twenty innovative new projects designed by frontline NHS staff to transform patient care. All frontline staff working in Primary Care Trusts can set up a social enterprise to improve their services under the 'right to request' scheme. This first wave of projects includes a wide range of services, including those from homeless people, children and young people and mental health services. Each of the 20 organisations will receive £30,000 of Department of Health funding; a dedicated mentor and access to professional development opportunities that will help ensure their social enterprise success.

### CBI warns against anti-competitive measures across the NHS

CBI director-general Richard Lambert last week wrote to health secretary Andy Burnham to express concern that the government's new policy for NHS organisations to be preferred providers of health services means patients may not receive the highest quality of care available. Richard said the best provider, regardless of sector, should be chosen by NHS commissioners. The new policy appears to be a protective measure designed to meet the demands of trade unions rather than the needs of patients. For further information contact [james.fothergill@cbi.org.uk](mailto:james.fothergill@cbi.org.uk)

### Hospital smoking shelters U-turn

Health bosses admit they are unable to stop people disobeying the no-smoking rule and lighting up just outside the hospital's main doors. This had led to complaints by patients and staff about second-hand smoke drifting into the building. Purpose-built shelters, which were dismantled two years ago, are to be set up again. Les Boobis, a medical director at City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, said the problem with smokers had become increasingly difficult to manage. "In an ideal world there would be no smoking at all within the vicinity of any health organisation, but trying to implement that ideal is proving to be very, very challenging," he said. "The best way we can protect staff and patients is to give them no excuse to smoke in a way that allows smoke to drift into hospital. So we are reluctantly providing them with an environment in which they are obliged to smoke if they wish to do so."

### DH to save up to £555m by investing in wellbeing of staff

The Government is to invest £6.5m to set up national systems to promote health and wellbeing among NHS staff. The DH has accepted recommendations made in an independent report by occupational health expert Steve Boorman, which could save the NHS up to 3.4 million working days - equivalent to 14,900 extra staff. The report recommends NHS trusts concentrate on prevention, and that senior NHS managers develop strategies to actively improve the health of workers and are judged by their ability to do so and to create conditions in which health and wellbeing policies are seen as a real and tangible benefit of working for the NHS.

Health secretary Andy Burnham said: "I am accepting Steve Boorman's recommendations and committing to help NHS organisations implement them. We hope that by making these improvements we will provide real benefits for NHS staff and patients. Savings of up to £555m per year that we can reinvest in the NHS will undoubtedly improve the quality of patient care."

### Christmas Period Worst Time for Losing Mobile Devices

London cabbies warn that this time is the worst time of year for leaving mobile devices such as phones, laptops and USB sticks in the back of their cabs as busy shoppers jump in and out of their cabs with their hands full of Christmas shopping.

### Gnomes cause health and safety row

A local authority has apologised to a West Midlands woman who was wrongly told to remove two ornamental gnomes from outside her home on health and safety grounds. Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council said a letter sent to Linda Langford, which also instructed her to withdraw a pottery tortoise from a communal area outside her flat in Tipton, had been based on a misunderstanding of its fire safety rules. The note from Sandwell Homes to Mrs Langford, 57, ordered her to take down a welcome plaque as well as the gnomes - one of which is hitting an anvil, the other reading a book.

## NPAG ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

### TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Programme of forthcoming NPAG training workshops (CPD Approved): -

DATE: 2010	TRAINING COURSE	LOCATION
25 January	Introduction to Environmental Awareness	Harrogate
23 February	Achieving a Resilient Organisation	London

For further information, please contact Victoria Combes: [victoria@npag.org.uk](mailto:victoria@npag.org.uk)

### BEST VALUE GROUPS

Programme of forthcoming NPAG Best Value Groups (CPD Approved): -

NPAG facilitates a series of national benchmarking clubs/best value groups within the NHS. Each programme of meetings enables peer groups of like-minded managers to have the opportunity to network; benchmark and compare services; review processes; provide networking opportunities; share experience; identify innovative and good working practice; and continuously develop and improve their services.

DATE: 2009	BEST VALUE GROUP	MEETING No	CYCLE	LOCATION
2 December	District Nurses	4 of 4	2009	Rugby
2 December	Children & Family Services	2 of 4	2009/10	Nuneaton
2 December	Operating Theatres	2 of 4	2009/10	London
3 December	EBME (South)	2 of 4	2009/10	London
3 December	Bank & Agency Nurses	4 of 4	2009	Manchester
3 December	Sterile Services	3 of 4	2009/10	London
4 December	Health & Safety/Risk Management	1 of 4	2009/10	Rugby
8 December	Shared Services Development Network	3 of 4	2009/10	London
9 December	Non-Patient Services Transport	3 of 4	2009/10	Cannock
9 December	National Patient Transport Services Modernisation Group	5 of 6	2009/10	Luton
10 December	Estates Services	4 of 4	2009	Edinburgh
15 December	Telecommunications	3 of 4	2009/10	London
DATE: 2010	BEST VALUE GROUP	MEETING No	CYCLE	LOCATION
3 January	Catering	3 of 4	2009/10	Cheshire
20 January	Occupational Health Services	2 of 4	2009/10	Birmingham
27 January	Facilities (South)	6 of 6	2009/10	London
27 January	Facilities (North)	4 of 4	2009/10	Huddersfield
3 February	EBME (North)	1 of 4	2010	Rochdale
24 February	National Patient Transport Services Modernisation Group	6 of 6	209/10	Luton
25 February	Portering Services Managers	1 of 4	2010	Chester

For further information please e-mail: [marie@npag.org.uk](mailto:marie@npag.org.uk); [gemma@npag.org.uk](mailto:gemma@npag.org.uk) or [victoria@npag.org.uk](mailto:victoria@npag.org.uk)

# NPAG News: EDITION 40 – November 2009

## EVENTS

Programme of forthcoming NPAG events (CPD Approved): -

DATE: 2010	EVENT	LOCATION
18 March	'A Journey in Lean'	London
March	'Achieving Costs and Efficiency Savings within the Healthcare Waste Sector'	Birmingham
May	EBME National Seminar	Midlands

For further information on all NPAG events please e-mail: [sally.harris@npag.org.uk](mailto:sally.harris@npag.org.uk) or visit the NPAG website: [www.npag.org.uk](http://www.npag.org.uk)

## BENCHMARKING

Many NPAG Best Value Groups are conducting national benchmarking surveys to identify areas for potential improvement and financial benefits. If you are interested in participating in any of the following exercises, please contact the named BVG Facilitator.

TOPIC	BEST VALUE GROUP	CONTACT
Catering Costs & Trust Profiles	Catering Services	<a href="mailto:terry.williams@nhs.net">terry.williams@nhs.net</a>
Restaurant Prices	Catering services	<a href="mailto:terry.williams@nhs.net">terry.williams@nhs.net</a>
Transport Costs	Non Patient Transport	<a href="mailto:fwj60@hotmail.com">fwj60@hotmail.com</a>
Health & Safety Risk Management	Health & Safety/Risk Management	<a href="mailto:john.king@npag.org.uk">john.king@npag.org.uk</a>

## NPAG MEMBERSHIP

Full details of NPAG Membership options and fees can be obtained from [marie@npag.org.uk](mailto:marie@npag.org.uk) or [victoria@npag.org.uk](mailto:victoria@npag.org.uk) or telephone **01245 544 600**.

## MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY

## MARKET TESTING / OUTSOURCING

We have over 25 years experience of conducting market testing and outsourcing projects within the NHS. We work with clients across the UK and help them on every aspect of the market testing process in evaluating the options for outsourcing services to determine the best outcome that meets their objectives. Most recently we have completed commissions within the higher education sector.

Please contact Kevin Brice, Director: [kevin.brice@npag.org.uk](mailto:kevin.brice@npag.org.uk) Telephone: 01245 544 600

Our experience covers all aspects of the process, including: -

- Project Management
- Service Reviews
- Specifications of Services
- Tender Submissions
- Tender Evaluations
- Contract Award Process
- Contract Monitoring

## NHS RESILIENCE

Our team is engaged with the Department of Health and NHS clients delivering training and management consultancy support on Emergency Preparedness; Business Continuity Management and Pandemic Flu Plans.

With our business partners, Sphere Health Ltd, the NPAG has developed a Business Continuity Pathway to offer a diverse range of training and consultancy services to assist clients to achieve BS NHS 25999 compliance – the Business Continuity Management (BCM) Standard developed between the NHS Resilience Project and British Standards Institute.

Please contact John King, Associate Business Manager: [john.king@npag.org.uk](mailto:john.king@npag.org.uk)

## Other Consultancy Projects

Please contact Kevin Brice, Director: [kevin.brice@npag.org.uk](mailto:kevin.brice@npag.org.uk) Telephone: 01245 544 600

Our management consultancy team is engaged with clients around the country on a range of service reviews and project management contracts.

## CONFERENCE ORGANISATION & EVENT MANAGEMENT

We organise over 130 events per annum across the UK. These currently range from one-day meetings for 10 persons up to two-day residential national conferences for up to 600 delegates.

Since 2000, we have been contracted by HM Treasury to organise a number of national residential conferences. Our current HM Treasury events programme includes the Government Finance Profession Annual Trainee and Qualified Accountants Conferences, and the Annual Heads of Internal Audit Conference. Each of these events is a residential conference held over two days, together with an exhibition and a conference dinner. The Annual Qualified Accountants Conference includes an Awards ceremony.

In addition to the above contracts, we also have framework agreements with the **National Audit Office** and the **Health & Safety Executive** for the supply of event management services.

Please contact Sally Harris, Event Manager for further information on our Conference Organisation & Event Management services: [sally.harris@npag.org.uk](mailto:sally.harris@npag.org.uk). Telephone: 01245 544 600.

**Murphy's Law:** "If you try to please everybody, nobody will like it."

Telephone enquiries to: 01245 544 600

Fax: 01245 544 610

The NPAG (National Performance Advisory Group) is an NHS organisation that promotes benchmarking and best value within the NHS, throughout the UK. The NPAG operates as an NHS self-financed, trading organisation, hosted within the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

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