



Spotlight on...

Director of Quality & Innovation, NHS
Salford Clinical Commissioning Group
Francine Thorpe

What does your role involve?

I lead on all aspects of quality, innovation and research for my Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). I am responsible for the Safeguarding, Medicines Management, Quality and Innovation teams and have developed a Quality and Safety Strategy. I am working with our GP membership and lead providers to implement the strategy and ensure the delivery of high quality services. I also lead on patient experience and am Chair of the Engagement and Experience Management group. In addition, I work with partner organisations to build research and innovation capability, supporting projects that include evaluation and roll-out. I attend meetings of the Governing Body where I present papers and participate fully in the discussions. I also work closely with members on all aspects of quality and safety improvement.

Tell us about your leadership journey

I trained as a physiotherapist and worked my way up through the traditional uni-professional management route, taking on the role of Physiotherapy Manager. I was appointed Physiotherapy Professional Advisor to the Allied Health Professional (AHP) Lead at the Department of Health, which gave me a great insight into the political influences on NHS services. As part of an AHP Directorate working in an integrated service across acute and community sectors, I became the AHP Director with responsibility for all AHP services. During this time I was appointed one of the non-medical advisors on the Commissioning Board and broadened my experience by becoming Head of Adult Community services. This involved the management of a much wider range of services including district nursing, sexual health and Tier 2 services as well as retaining leadership for AHP services.

I took up a secondment opportunity as Associate Director of Partnerships to lead community services through transition as part of Transforming Community Services, which involved significant service redesign around unscheduled care services. I led a programme to integrate GP Out of Hours services with our A&E Department and integrate three Walk-in Centres into a single unscheduled care hub. cont...





...cont Following the transition of community services into Salford Royal Foundation Trust I managed the Emergency Assessment Unit, Elderly Care services and Medical High Dependency while retaining some responsibility for some community services. At the same time I successfully integrated three separate assessment units into a new, 55 bedded facility creating the concept of an 'emergency village'. I also expanded elderly care services to include community geriatricians and a new orthogeriatric service. As a senior manager I was part of the hospital's out of hours on call rota, problem solving and decision making on day operational issues.

What transferable skills did you develop that you use in your current role?

Problem solving – being able to identify key issues that impact on service delivery and then putting strategies in place to resolve them.

Communication skills – active listening, understanding the influences on key stakeholders and how this impacts on their behaviour and tailoring my communication style to a variety of audiences.

Motivational skills – an ability to encourage, persuade and enthuse people.

Team working – valuing the contribution of individuals towards team goals, building effective relationships and a team culture.

Organisational skills – prioritising, dealing with urgent situations as they arise and planning for the medium to long term.

What development have you undertaken to support you as a leader?

I have accessed a variety of leadership development opportunities throughout my career including: a King Fund leadership study tour to Seattle; Emerging Leaders Programme with the NHS Leadership Academy; Aspiring Directors Programme; a coaching skills workshop to develop my own skills and subsequent coaching of others and mentorship from an experienced mentor.

What have you learnt about the transition to a wider leadership role?

That skills are transferable and that I should have done it earlier in my career as the opportunities outside the AHP world are huge. A wider leadership role brings more influence and can help to promote the value of AHPs in a much broader sphere. Clinicians have similar mindsets irrespective of their professional backgrounds and value someone in a leadership role who has a clinical background.

What are your top tips for AHPs seeking to develop their leadership skills?

Be brave and look outside your comfort zone. Consider getting a coach or a mentor from other disciplines to widen your horizons. Seize development opportunities such as secondments as they arise as they will help you to develop your skills and raise your profile.

