

## Oxford Academic Health Science Network case study

- **Date:** Q3 2016/17
- **Programme/Theme:** Patient and Public Involvement, Engagement and Experience
- **Title:** [Leading together – patients and professionals take a collaborative approach to solve health issues](#)

### Supportive quotes

*“It was exhausting but worthwhile – never underestimate the power of a group to help you!”*

Veronica Corben, lay partner

*“I had an idea to solve a problem around the mental wellbeing of some of our personnel. We have managed to do something that is making a difference to their lives and their wellbeing.”*

Steve Kilbey, Head of RAF Medical Services

*“What you've been doing here is the way to go: professionals and citizens working together to make health and wellbeing better. Just being in the room the patient or lay person changes the conversation.”*

Jeremy Taylor, Chief Executive, National Voices

*“It’s fantastic!”* Dr Nigel Acheson, Medical Director, NHS England South

### Overview summary

Over 100 people have completed The *Leading Together Programme* - an innovative leadership development course co-created and co-delivered by patients, carers, professionals and the public. This is the only course for professionals and lay people that has been evaluated and spread. The programme is an innovative approach to changing culture - bringing together patients, carers and the public with professionals to reflect and learn from each other. It consists of three one-day workshops, spread over three months, for equal numbers of lay people and professionals from the same geographical area. This, in conjunction with a joint project, aims to develop local sustainable relationships.

### Challenge identified

Working in partnership with patients, carers and the public is embedded in national policy; supportive policy is important. However, actually doing it can prove challenging, for individuals and for organisations - it requires a different way of working. The Leading Together Programme supports the development of new ways of working. In addition, the voice of people in society is unequal; this

is true in healthcare involvement. The Leading Together Programme consciously tries to redress this imbalance, through targeting seldom-heard groups during recruitment.

## **Actions taken**

NHS England South, Oxford AHSN and NHS Thames Valley and Wessex Leadership Academy jointly ran a pilot programme with 20 professionals and lay people. Following a positive independent evaluation and 18-month follow-up of participants, a formal tender process was launched to appoint a partner to roll out the programme across the south of England. In 2016, over 100 people took part in the Programme at six different venues from Crawley in the east to Bristol in the west.

The programme covers:

- developing knowledge and understanding of the benefits of working collaboratively
- sharing expertise and experiences to support learning
- building collaborative networks
- learning to appreciate different perspectives

The participants work in pairs – one professional with one lay partner – to co-produce solutions to current challenges.

## **Impacts/outcomes**

Thanks to the Leading Together Programme, local health systems across the south of England are developing a cohort of lay people and professionals who really get co-production. They have learnt together and worked together on a project and can take this relationship forward into local strategic work, for example as part of the development of Sustainability and Transformation Plans. This helps to develop sustainable relationships and people able to advocate for and implement co-production more widely. This critical mass is essential to create culture change for person-centred care.

Nationally, the programme is contributing to the expanding evidence base for the benefits of co-production, describing participants' experiences and their projects as case studies to support spread locally and nationally. The co-produced projects are works in progress with some already delivering results – from new ways to get information to patients to strengthening workforce resilience.

This is what some participants have said:

***“I learnt the value of looking at my leadership style, about how to engage partners effectively and to understand they might be on a different journey to me.”***

***“I personally learned a lot – useful approaches way beyond my usual what/why/how/get stuck in.”***

Many of the Leading Together 2016 'graduates' came together last month to share what they have learned and to showcase their projects (see image above). Speakers included Jeremy Taylor, Chief Executive, National Voices, and Dr Nigel Acheson, Medical Director, NHS England South.

An independent evaluation is due to be published in January 2017.

## **National AHSN priorities addressed**

Building a culture of partnership and collaboration

## **Future plans**

The co-produced projects are continuing to have an impact locally, regionally, nationally and – potentially – internationally. We are planning next year's Leading Together Programme, including co-designing and delivering a programme specifically for people with learning disabilities.

## **Tips for adoption**

Genuinely working together isn't easy and can't be rushed – but once it is established the results are stronger and relationships deeper and more likely to last. It requires commitment of time and energy. Running the course requires expert facilitation.

## **Further information**

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<http://www.oxfordahsn.org/our-work/patient-and-public-engagement-involvement-and-experience/leading-together/>