

PCRS Respiratory Leadership Programme

Case Study: Leadership skills give physiotherapist confidence to pitch for service improvement



Siobhan Hollier won a commissioner's approval for an idea to improve her pulmonary rehabilitation service after perfecting the 'lift pitch' technique in a Respiratory Leadership Programme workshop.

Siobhan, a Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist with BOC Healthcare and team lead for the pulmonary rehabilitation service in West Norfolk, had identified that her service would benefit from integrating ambulatory oxygen assessment and delivery.

The service was not joined up because oxygen was delivered by a different service. Organising oxygen for patients had to be done by respiratory physiotherapists as an extra task in addition to their existing workload.

Now, thanks to skills learned at the Respiratory Leadership Programme, Siobhan was able to deliver an effective 'lift pitch' to a commissioner during a meeting she was attending and was able to convince him that her idea would both improve patients' quality of life and also benefit staff and the service. The 'lift pitch' teaches attendees to outline their idea for a project in the short time that it takes a lift to reach the top floor.

Siobhan says having the oxygen provided within the pulmonary rehabilitation service now enables staff to sort out the oxygen patients need straight away and prevents them from being bounced between different services.

"Previously I had to refer the patient to a different service and they then had to go and have an appointment to sort out the equipment and it could take a month. Now the integrated service saves my team's clinical time and reduces paperwork. The patient is able to obtain the ambulatory oxygen they need within a week," explains Siobhan.

Siobhan says being confident about delivering a lift pitch enabled her to bend the commissioner's ear during an opportunistic snatch of time. "I don't think I would have been successful had I not practised my lift pitch so many times. In the workshop we worked on our lift pitches from lots of different angles, making us think about our projects from the patient, policy and commissioner perspective, thinking each time about the mind-set of the recipient. Having thought about how to draw out the important message for a target audience helped me enormously when I found myself face-to-face with the commissioner. It enabled me

to get my key points across clearly and succinctly and he was really receptive."

She says the Respiratory Leadership Programme has improved her confidence as a leader: "It has taught me a lot about presentation skills and how to get a message across. The group has also been great for networking. Having relocated to my current job 18 months earlier, they have been able to signpost me to other PCRS members in my region who I can contact for support and advice."

Siobhan says she plans to use her new leadership skills to work on getting all the BOC Healthcare pulmonary rehabilitation services accredited to ensure they are all of the same high standard.

Having learned about how to harness effective patient feedback at one of the workshops, she also now plans to redesign her service's patient questionnaire to make it more effective. "We started an audit recently to look at the quality of the feedback we get and are now asking whether we are asking the right questions," she says.

Siobhan says she has also learned a lot about the dynamic of the team and has a greater understanding of people's barriers to change and why projects fail. "I have realised the importance of having a team goal which is now something I am thinking about in my own service. It is important to make sure the team is all working towards the same end," she says.

Siobhan is also gaining leadership experience within PCRS. She facilitated the June Respiratory Leadership workshop meeting and has gained the confidence to take on a new role as a member of the PCRS Education Committee.

The next PCRS Respiratory Leadership Programme workshop is on the theme of 'Bringing out the Best in Yourself and Others' to be held on 8–9 November, Ramada Birmingham, Solihull.

