



The Operating Game

Chris Ellison, Directorate Manager - Scheduled Care Medicine, at Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust

Operating Game - HFMA Testimonial

"Finance can be such a dry subject to anyone outside, but the Operating Game puts it in a much more user-friendly context. It's a completely different approach to anything else I've seen in that it brings everyone face-to-face and encourages them to get involved in an exciting way. It's an incredibly powerful tool and certainly the best financial training tool I've come across.

"The benefits are immediately obvious - it works in such a way that it's open to all members of staff, it's face to face so nothing can be misconstrued, it's very visual so it encourages everyone to think about what they're doing while they do it and it puts a face to the finance function. Before we trialled it, we found that other departments never really understood how we work and how we can help them make the best of their service, but now it's hugely improved that relationship and we've seen a much greater level of engagement.

"In terms of the financial benefits the game has brought us, our temporary agency staff spend was reduced in the year we started to introduce the game and many of our loss making budgets actually went into profit. There was nothing else we were doing that we could possibly attribute towards these positive changes, so for us to see a definite improvement in spending patterns has been great. It's evident that when staff can practically see the impact that spending on agency staff has on an organisation's finances - and in turn the level of service they provide - then they quickly learn to adapt.

"The way the financial system works is that if you're spending more efficiently then that definitely improves the level of service you can offer, and we've seen improvements across the board. As well as a better link-up between outpatient care, clinical staff and overhead staff, we have also seen a big financial upswing in sectors as diverse as emergency care and estate facilities.

"Since we brought the game in-house in 2012 we have used it in training for more than 170 people across a range of departments, everyone from nurses and operation managers to consultants and clinicians. We used it on a regular basis 10 times a year to begin with and it has proved to be a very powerful tool. The vast majority of staff, 98 per cent, say they agree or strongly agree that they have had positive learning outcomes as a result of it. People are actually ringing us up to say they want to get involved and learn more, which has never happened before."

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE NHS OPERATING GAME

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