

Commissioning Process Change at Tower Hamlets PCT

Capgemini delivers world class commissioning project for a Primary Care Trust (PCT) in East London

The Situation

The Department of Health has launched a World Class Commissioning (WCC) program to transform the way in which healthcare services are commissioned by Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). An Assurance Framework will require PCTs across the UK to demonstrate robust governance and performance against 11 areas of commissioning competence, and achieve better health outcomes. In early 2008, Tower Hamlets PCT (THPCT)—responsible for Tower Hamlets residents in East London—engaged Capgemini and Humana (health intelligence specialists) to assess current performance across prescribed competencies and design a change program to rapidly improve identified areas of weakness.

The Solution

Capgemini worked with THPCT to develop a standardized, transparent and time-bound commissioning process, driven by health intelligence data to ensure commissioning decisions addressed latest clinical evidence, patient experience and the annual Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

A performance management framework, linked to the Vital Signs (a new Department-wide approach), and supported

by tools to cascade corporate objectives throughout the organization will enable outputs to be reported to the PCT board in terms of performance. An interactive online tool gives commissioners at Tower Hamlets access to process maps supported by templates and guidance with the responsibilities of different teams and stakeholders clearly articulated.

In parallel, Capgemini conducted international cross-industry research to identify best practice approaches to deal with the many complexities of healthcare commissioning. This research facilitated development of a transformation design and change plan, aligned closely to the evidence required by the WCC Assurance Framework.

The Result

As the project moves into full deployment and towards final stages of rollout of WCC Assurance, Tower Hamlets PCT is in a strong position to demonstrate its competence as a leading PCT in London. The process and performance management tool has provided THPCT

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Tower Hamlets PCT



with the opportunity to gain control over its commissioning operations, a platform to transform its services and a roadmap to become the best of world-class commissioners.

How Tower Hamlets PCT and Capgemini Worked Together

Excellence in commissioning relies on availability of high quality information for decision makers at all levels of the PCT organization, a systematic approach, and strong collaboration with partners, providers and the community in order to shape and deliver high quality services. The team, led by Capgemini and based in THPCT offices to maximize synergy and mitigate risks, carried out thorough assessment of current practices and identified a number of key issues:

- significant variation in the way commissioning was conducted across the organization and undue reliance on heroism of individuals—performing under tight deadlines was common
- opaque annual reporting and budgeting cycles that were not linked to commissioning activity, which itself was unplanned and ad hoc
- lack of health intelligence data with priorities for strategic planning and investment being identified intuitively, often influenced by health areas or services that “shouted the loudest”
- strategic objectives, developed independently of each other, that were not aligned to operational plans
- decision makers felt overwhelmed, yet uninformed, by too much data flowing upwards without analysis and interpretation.

A full-time project manager guided work streams, validated deliverables and ensured timely reporting and delivery. Using a variety of methods and approaches, Capgemini worked intimately with THPCT to bring clarity and simplicity to a complex environment.

Stakeholder engagement

Associate Directors from all directorates across the PCT organization and selected external stakeholders were engaged throughout the project to gain rapid insight into the current processes, map THPCT to the WCC competencies, and test design options to improve areas of weakness.

Process Design

Using specialist process modeling software, the project team designed a standardized process that incorporated good practice where it existed already, in addition to seeking operational process improvement throughout the commissioning cycle. The output was tested through design workshops with PCT staff in order to ensure fitness for purpose and buy-in to the new way of working.

Best Practice Transformation

International cross-industry best practice methods were researched by breaking down the commissioning cycle and identifying organizations that were excellent at specific activities (e.g. patient and public engagement). The results of this effort enabled THPCT to take forward “better than world-class” options.

Performance Management

Capgemini’s approach to Performance Management uses an assessment across five areas of capability: leadership and governance; culture and capabilities; systems and processes; objectives and measures; information and insight. A

tailored framework was developed for THPCT, comprising objective setting tools, reporting processes and links to national performance management requirements (e.g. the Vital Signs). This framework will enable the PCT to demonstrate with confidence its performance in delivering improved outcomes to Tower Hamlets residents.

“Capgemini really helped us to understand what it means to be a World Class Commissioning organization. The project team delivered an excellent piece of work that has set us up well for the challenges we will face over the next year and beyond, and their inclusive approach enabled us to ensure that new processes were developed by the Capgemini team with key commissioners within our organization.”

Jeremy Burden, Director of Strategic Commissioning, Tower Hamlets PCT



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In collaboration with Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust

Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust (THPCT) strives to improve the health of locals living in Tower Hamlets in East London. It aims to reduce inequalities in health and modernize services for local

people. To achieve these goals, THPCT relies on regular assessment of the health needs of its communities, commissioning services from hospital trusts and other local organizations, and by providing a range of services itself. For more information, please visit: <http://www.thpct.nhs.uk/>