THE CONSULTANCY COMPANY
Health and Social Care

Lean in Healthcare

An Holistic Approach

Delivering the best possible care to every patient without waste - using Lean

The healthcare needs of patients continue to require increasing levels of service from the NHS at a time when associated levels of public investment are no longer rising year on year. Improving the quality of service to patients, reducing waste, increasing the productivity of scarce resources and reducing costs to help deliver the best clinical outcomes for patients is critical; Lean is the perfect tool to achieve these improvements.

Many NHS trusts have deployed Lean and Six Sigma approaches to drive service improvement programmes in a wide range of their healthcare delivery systems. Success has been mixed. A number of trusts have achieved high profile and sustainable benefits, others have achieved initial successes that have then gradually eroded, while others have failed to get lean off the ground and are left wondering where it all went wrong.

"Mapping the steps along the patient pathway was a revelation to staff familiar with only one part of it. Overall, they were delighted with the approach, feeling empowered rather than directed."

Stella Goddard
General Manager
Theatre and Critical Care East Sussex Hospital Trust

What can be achieved?

Our approach and experience of lean in healthcare provides real benefits in clinical and support areas:

- Greater capacity - allowing more procedures from the same resources.
- Sustainable delivery of initiatives such as 18 weeks.
- More time to care and a better quality of care.
- More efficient and better aligned supporting activities.
- Lower cost – removing under recovery of PBR.
- Greater ownership, commitment and morale.
- Better health outcomes.

Tailored lean solutions

We recognise that individual trusts will be at very different points of evolution. That is why every lean consultancy assignment we undertake is designed to meet the specific needs of each of our clients. Underpinning each lean assignment, however, is a robust, well-proven core platform of lean principles.

We believe that, by involving staff on the ground and those with authority to agree change, it is possible to implement significant change making real improvements along the pathway, as the patient would experience it. Accepting these core principles, accompanied by appropriate application of lean tools and techniques, is at the heart of every successful lean transformation.

"The initial 'event' is results driven and focuses on a few core tools, delivering real process improvements in a way that supports the current organisation and shows the potential of the wider benefits to the organisation."

Anne Carter
Consultant
The Consultancy Company

The journey to Lean transformation

We look to support lean in healthcare activities at three core levels, dependent on the current status of the client organisation:

- **Rapid Improvement Event** (RIE)

  This intensive, focused approach is frequently the first step used to tackle a specific pathway or area, making significant improvements that previously have not been possible, thereby creating a momentum and enthusiasm for change.

  A typical RIE lasts for no more than 5 days and focuses on a single discrete set of activities (for example, the management and scheduling of patients through a single theatre). We engage the team to examine the current process in detail, to determine where the process is wasteful or disjointed, explore the root causes of the problems and develop potential solutions. Building on a short introduction to basic principles, lean tools and techniques are introduced as they are required – truly "learning by doing".

- **Continuous Improvement**

  Having developed a platform and enthusiasm for improvement, the next level is to make improvement an on-going process, utilising the new skills developed by those who have taken part in the Rapid Improvement Event to lead and take part in improvement activities on a regular basis.

  Our consultants will train and coach these key staff, both in facilitator and coaching skills, along with a more in-depth exploration of lean tools and the establishment of a continuous improvement process.

  Either building on the success of an RIE or through smaller scale targeted activities, the continuous improvement process builds the foundation for sustainable ongoing service improvement.

- **Transforming the Whole Organisation**

  The long-term goal of any lean transformation is that improvement activities become the "way we do things round here" and part of the daily job for all staff. This requires the transformation of the wider organisation through larger-scale application of the lean approach. Underpinning this is the development of the necessary lean leadership skills and lean champions across the organisation to create the culture to sustain and evolve a regular pattern of improvement activity in every area of the organisation.

"Effective management, call it lean if you will, means thinking about flow from the patient's point of view. So we work with healthcare providers to improve the whole patient pathway."

Harvey Leach
Senior Consultant
The Consultancy Company

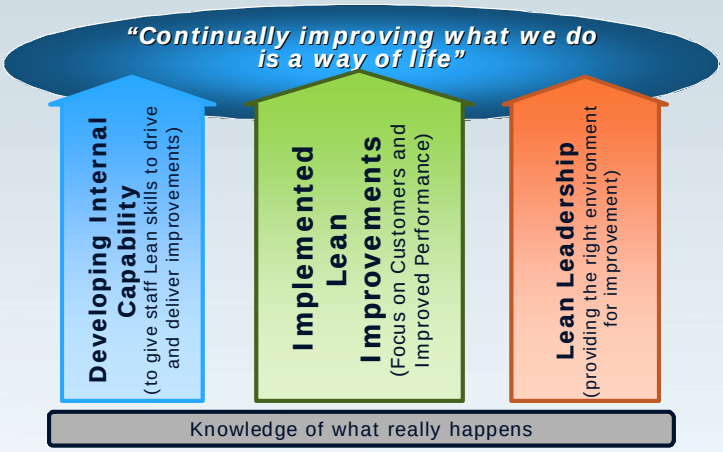
Do you need help with your Lean journey?

For an initial meeting call:

Tim Richardson
Managing Director
07786 961716

Putting it into practice

Successful introduction of lean requires attention to three inter-related strands of activity at every stage of the transformation process:



- **Lean leadership**

  Even if not actively involved in lean projects, senior managers must gain an understanding of the underlying principles of lean thinking and how this requires them to both change their leadership style and the way in which the organisation works.

- **Implementing real improvements using lean**

  We believe that, rather than teaching a range of lean tools and techniques and then 'letting the team loose', the best way to learn to apply lean is through tackling real problems and introducing the most appropriate methods to generate effective and enduring change.

- **Developing internal capability**

  From the earliest stage of implementing real lean improvements, it is essential to identify and develop those in your organisation who have a particular understanding, ability and interest in using lean. This group will become the early leaders of lean improvements and will champion the wider adoption of lean thinking in the organisation. To support them in adopting this role, they will require more in-depth support in lean techniques and appropriate leadership and facilitator skills.

Our lean in healthcare consultants have a deep understanding of health care and our proven methodology enables our clients to adopt a lean in healthcare strategy that meets their needs. In partnership we deliver sustainable benefit and the ability to use lean as a vehicle for strategic change.

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