

Decision Conferencing helps Healthy Buxton make major decision

Client background

Derbyshire County Primary Care Trust and the Buxton Commissioning Group (the three Buxton GP practices) are working together with other organisations in Buxton and the surrounding area looking at how to improve health services for the local population. The goal of the Healthy Buxton Project is to provide the people of Buxton with services and facilities that meet the needs of the local population in the 21st century.

Client challenge

The selection of the preferred option for development in Buxton was arguably one of the most important parts of the whole project. The potential for disagreement between stakeholders in the project was great, as was the potential for challenges to the decision if it was viewed as ill-conceived. Making the wrong choice at this point could also result in future costs being higher than they need to be or future services not being as good as they could be: something everyone wished to avoid.

Under the joint leadership of Simeon Jones, Head of PCT provider services Commissioning and Tracy Allan, Director of Provisioning, a team made up of a cross-section of healthcare professionals, including the three commissioning GP's, and public representatives was brought together to consider the options available.

The Healthy Buxton project team wanted to arrive at a decision that would meet with public support and represent the best health for the people of Buxton.

How Catalyze helped

The first step in the process was for the team to agree the criteria by which they would value each of the development options. To do this a facilitated workshop was held with the stakeholders where various perspectives and healthcare needs were discussed. During the workshop a number of themes were explored in the context of the overall strategy for healthcare in Derbyshire, looking at health inequality, physical attributes, social responsibility, quality of service and service continuity that led to a set of agreed criteria.

Using the agreed criteria a model was constructed using HiView and this served as the focus for a series of workshops where the stakeholders considered how each of the options

We have helped the Healthy Buxton project:

- Arrive at a shortlist of service development options
- Align options with public opinion
- Secure the support of healthcare professionals

“The structured methodology and excellent facilitation provided by Catalyze was invaluable in steering a diverse group of stakeholders through a complex option appraisal process.”

Tracy Allen,
Managing Director,
Derbyshire Community
Health Services.

contributed to each of the criteria. During these workshops various scenarios were discussed and participants were able to explore concerns, test ideas and gain a shared understanding of each development option, eventually arriving at an agreed order of priority based upon the combined benefit contribution each made.

During the same period a parallel public consultation was held and the results from this were used to build a similar model to gauge public needs and preferences. Once this was completed the two models were compared and it was found that there was an exceptionally high degree of alignment between the two, with the top three preferred options identical for both the public and the project team.

Enabling Effective Decisions

The process allowed the Healthy Buxton project team to arrive at a shortlist of development options that aligned with public opinion and could be robustly supported by the healthcare professionals.

The process was monitored by Mr Stuart Hill, Commissioning Improvement Manager for Derbyshire County PCT and in feedback from the participants and his own observations he concluded that the approach achieved:

- Balanced stakeholder representation
- Auditable
- Collaborative end-to-end process
- Everyone’s opinion is respected
- Good contribution and engagement
- Real-time analyses
- Sensitivity analysis
- Conclusions based on consensus
- Structured
- Validated decision
- Open to challenge
- Sound rationale to process

Also noting that one participant wondered “How else could it have been done?”

Tel: +44 (0) 1962 775 923
Email: info@catalyze.co.uk

www.catalyze.co.uk

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