

LONDON BOROUGH OF LAMBETH

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Nana Amoa-Buahin, HR Director, London Borough of Lambeth

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GOING THE EXTRA MILE

Helping the London Borough of Lambeth find a new Chief Executive two years ago was the beginning, not the end, of Harvey Nash consultant Noorzaman Rashid's assignment.

“One of the most common failings of most executive search firms is that they place someone in an organisation, get paid and walk away, leaving you to sink or swim,” says Lambeth's HR Director Nana Amoa-Buahin. “But if the new Chief Executive hadn't worked out, we would all have looked silly. So we were very keen that Harvey Nash should help us build a strong and effective team for Lambeth.”

In the past, Lambeth did not enjoy the most favourable reputation in government. So recasting the top team following the appointment of the new Chief Executive was the first step in rebuilding its reputation for excellence in performance.

Amoa-Buahin had worked with management consultancies PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and Future Considerations to determine what the best leadership style for Lambeth should be. She then asked Harvey Nash to help start the work to transform the culture of the entire organisation accordingly.

Harvey Nash used its behavioural profiling tool called P3 to gauge people's ability and performance against the six leadership styles that PwC and Future Considerations had identified as being able to transform leadership at Lambeth, as well as against industry benchmarks. They started with the strategic leadership board of seven people, and then extended the programme to the wider leadership team of some 70 staff in the next three management tiers.

“Once they had benchmarked people, they were able to map out areas for both individual and team development to change behaviours and improve performance. They could then plot people's progress on what we call 'the Lambeth curve' towards our ultimate objective of cultural transformation,” explains Amoa-Buahin.

London Borough of Lambeth improved its Audit Commission star rating this year from 1 ('poor') to 3 ('good and improving strongly'), and the Audit Commission acknowledged that there was clear leadership at all levels of the Council.

Amoa-Buahin says: “People were sceptical about the benefits of the P3 tool, but Noorzaman Rashid and his team helped

transform the way they approached their work and shifted the blame culture. That's a phenomenal achievement, and it takes someone who really understands people, organisations and their particular goals, to make it work. I am absolutely thrilled with what he and his team are doing.”



- The London Borough of Lambeth used Harvey Nash both to find a new Chief Executive and to ensure that the appointment was sustainable by helping to create a more cohesive top team
- Harvey Nash used its P3 profiling tool to benchmark the top team's ability and attitude against pre-defined leadership criteria. This highlighted areas for individual and team performance, and the exercise was replicated for the next three layers of management
- The change in leadership culture led the Audit Commission to change its rating of the Council from 'poor' to 'good and improving strongly'