

# POLICY NET

## Innovating for Organisational Change

### 1. What is a Policy Net?

A Policy Net is a form of national action learning sets established by the **Public Services Management Network** that is an independent national learning organisation for managers working in or for public services.

Policy Nets consist of between 12 and 15 participants from different public sector organisations who meet four times a year to explore a common issue in an informal forum. This is undertaken with an “expert” facilitator to support the process.

Policy Nets are a proven process for furthering learning and development, in which participants can share successes, problems and explore best practice and innovation.

### 2. The Aim of Policy Net –

- There has never been a greater need for managers, particularly those in the senior/midrange roles to have good quality 'tools' and information to help them achieve better performance, change their organisational cultures and improve the 'health' of their teams. All of this at times when budget constraints bite ever deeper, expectations rise and technology brings about ever swifter challenges and opportunities.
- Improvement of public services is at the heart of the government's modernisation agenda and managers from across the public sector are engaged in improving services for users. Public service providers have to balance the achievement of national targets alongside local needs and priorities. There is much to be learned from the experience in different sectors about how to initiate and sustain improvement and achieve targets.
- In local government the CPA has provided a performance baseline for councils and authorities have been doing improvement planning to focus their efforts to meet challenging targets. In Health, bodies like the Modernisation Agency have been experimenting with local health providers to find the best ways of achieving service improvement in the context of a centrally prescribed system of targets and performance reporting. Crime and Disorder Partnerships have been learning how to use targets to drive improvements in community safety in localities. Local Strategic partnerships (LSPs) have been set up to bring organisations together to agree shared objectives and targets to achieve greater impact in a locality.

- Financial restrictions are really starting to bite in the public sector as jobs are lost in the health sector and the next major comprehensive spending review will have resource implications for our organisations.
- This is an opportunity for managers from different sectors to learn from each other about making the best use of resources available and the exploration of creativity that can be nurtured encouraged and used in making real changes within the organisation.
- The content and direction of the Policy Net will be determined largely by the participants and the facilitators, but may include:
  - ▷ What really works in organisational change and what are the organisational barriers to delivering organisational changes?
  - ▷ The exploration of how creativity can be nurtured, encouraged and used in change.
  - ▷ What creativity/change tools/methods managers use now and need for the future.
  - ▷ What can be learned from different sectors about how to achieve service improvement?
  - ▷ Looking at how targets can help or hinder organisations to join up to deliver better outcomes for users
  - ▷ The kinds of measures and targets which are needed at different levels within an organisation and the impact these have employees and customers
  - ▷ The potential to bring together and use national and local targets to drive improvement for example through local area agreements
  - ▷ How targets can help LSPs drive change and achieve improvement in localities
  - ▷ What opportunities there are to influence government thinking on targets given signs of some willingness to re-think

The aim of this Policy Net is one that explores the managerial aspects of prompting, leading or responding to change. It would offer opportunities to both learn of new creativity/change tools and bring along the ones that work for people - a true exchange.

As a sub theme, the Net will involve itself in some developmental work, e.g. creating and perhaps testing-out easily usable creativity and change tools/material for managers.

### **3. Who should join Policy Net and who will facilitate it?**

- \* Any managers from any public sector organisation who are keen to network with colleagues to share learning about delivering targets and achieving improvement.
- \* Managers with responsibilities for performance management and improvement strategies in particular services or in corporate roles

Steve Loraine and Dejan Ajzenkol will facilitate the Policy Net.

Steve has 25 years experience in both the public and commercial sectors at senior levels and now specialises in assisting organisations to develop healthy leadership practice and service performance.

As well as serving on corporate management teams as a head and director of services, in his consultancy capacity he was the Assistant Chief Executive to Michael Frater at Walsall Council as part of the Interim Management Team which laid the foundations for that Council's exemplary improvement. He continues to work with the Council on various projects and initiatives. More recently he has worked directly with the Ministerial Appointee at Hull City Council over an extended period to stabilise and improve the governance of that Council following a formal intervention by the Minister for Local Government.

Steve is currently engaged by several large organisations on developmental activities and brings a wealth of current and emerging thinking on change leadership. He also coaches individual executives and facilitates learning sets such as this one.

Dejan Ajzenkol has over 10 years of managerial experience working for some major private sector companies, in the UK and abroad, including Taylor Woodrow Plc, Hyder Consulting Plc and most recently Borough and District Councils such as Walsall, Fenland and North Shropshire.

Since 2004, Dejan's work has focused on the public sector, leading projects and programmes and working with Executive Directors and Heads of Service as they transform their projects and services to meet demanding expectations.

He has also delivered creativity and innovation seminars centred around the 5G model for modern organisations and he often quotes Dr. Hammer (MIT Professor of Computer Science)

**“ . . . The ‘soft stuff’ is really the hard stuff.**

Dejan is a member of the Chartered Management Institute and an alumnus at the Open University Business School where he obtained his masters degree in Business Administration.

#### **4. What will be the outcomes of Policy Net Innovating for Organisational Change?**

In addition to attending four half-day sessions over a year, participants are encouraged to develop their own informal networking. The sessions will assist participants to:

- Share best practice and develop thinking on current and future policy issues relevant to participants by utilising the knowledge, experience and work being undertaken by the organisations represented in the group.
- Develop participants' capability to network across organisations more effectively, sharing current information and exchanging innovative ideas on a more regular basis.

#### **5. How to get involved and what does it cost?**

To join the Policy Net – please complete the attached application form and return it to the Public Services Management Network. *The first meeting will be arranged at the convenience of all participants of the Policy Net.* A written confirmation will be sent to you indicating whether or not your application has been accepted. Acceptance of membership will be based on creating a balance in terms of experience, type of organisation, gender and race.

***Membership of Policy Net – will cost £560 in total.*** The fee will cover the cost of administration, facilitation, and will include refreshments and lunch at each of the four meetings over a 12-month period. Please note that there will be no refund in respect of any meetings that are missed. As a member of this Policy Net you will also have free membership of the Public Services Management Network for 12 months. This entitles you to a regular bulletin, plus discounts on a range of seminars and conferences.

**POLICY NET –  
APPLICATION FORM**

**First-name(s):**

**Surname:**

**Job Title:**

**Organisation:**

**Address for communication:**

**Tel:**

**Mobile:**

**Fax:**

**Email:**

**Brief description of job or role:**

**What would you want to achieve through your membership of the Policy Net?**

**Please return this form to Warren Tonks at 20 Hazel Drive, Wythall,  
Birmingham, B47 5RJ or e-mail [warrentonks@hotmail.com](mailto:warrentonks@hotmail.com)**