

# Working with Merlin to create a Leadership and Management Development Programme

## The organisation

Merlin specialises in health, saving lives in times of crisis and helping to rebuild shattered health services. Each year, Merlin helps more than 15 million people in up to 20 countries.

## The need

Merlin wanted to build a stronger and more effective management culture at head office and country programme level to deliver organisational growth and its strategic objectives. Investment in management development was seen as key to achieving this. The main areas for development had been identified and Merlin wanted to create a framework with individual training modules targeted at different management levels. The approach needed to be flexible to take into account the impact of the ever-changing environment in which Merlin works on the needs and availability of staff.

## What we did

Along with Merlin's Learning & Development Manager, our team included Michele Dennison from MDMD Consulting, who has experience of working with Merlin and a background in Performance Management, and Jacqueline Hill from J Hill Associates who is experienced in leadership development. We ran an initial workshop with the steering group to visualise how Merlin leaders would be operating differently as a result of a successful leadership development programme. Consolidating this information with the key development areas already identified enabled us to develop the Merlin Leadership and Management Development Programme (LMDP). The LMDP framework identifies key development modules across a range of disciplines such as finance, HR, leadership, security and project management at three different levels; Awareness, Threshold and Advanced. Once the overall framework was agreed, Jacqueline and Michele developed pilot training modules for Performance Management, Building High Performing Teams, Developing Strategy, and Emotional Intelligence. (The other modules will be sourced externally or developed over time as funding and other resources allow.) The participants committed to an action plan and 1:1 telephone coaching between each module to help them embed their learning. Finally an evaluation workshop was held to review LMPD, the pilot modules, and decide how to develop LMDP further.

## Benefits

- By starting with a vision of what successful leaders in Merlin will look like we were able to tailor the LMDP to Merlin's needs rather than 'off-the-shelf' solutions.
- Leadership development activity in Merlin is positioned within a coherent development framework that will be integrated into the Performance Management process.
- By piloting the courses, a range of managers could be involved and give their input on the appropriateness to Merlin of the material covered.
- Merlin now has a flexible framework into which they can build new modules as and when funding and other resources allow.

A year later Merlin developed a third dimension to the Merlin LMDP - different ways of delivering the learning. Merlin commissioned Michele and Jacqueline to develop Distance Learning Packs for each of the existing modules plus new modules on “Managing Remotely”, “Cross-Cultural Teamworking”, “Managing Conflict” and “Managing Change”.

Bryony Glenn, HR Director at Merlin commented, “The consultants were able to help us to clearly identify the impacts that a successful leadership development programme could have on the leadership effectiveness of our managers in a variety of contexts, and to develop a flexible approach and delivery methodology which could be tailored to meet the particular development needs of each manager.”