



Foresight
Partnership

Supporting leadership, governance and improvement



Municipal Leadership Housing Forum

Building Houses through Building People

Building Capable Organisations

Sue Rubenstein



Overview of the session

- Introductions – Something about me and my challenges – learning about you and yours
- The improvement ‘landscape’ in UK public services
 - Performance management interventions
 - Developmental interventions
- Working with one developmental approach in practice

FP What sorts of clients have I worked with?

- National Health Service organisations – Commissioners and Providers
- National level arms length public bodies and agencies
- Large charities
- Large Housing Associations
- Local Authorities
- On one surreal occasion even Westminster Abbey and the Church of England!

FP The top three organisational challenges

- Robust and strategic executive leadership within politically managed services
- Creating effective (right skills and knowledge), empowered (willing to take responsibility), accountable (within a clear reporting framework) managers
- Making 'user focus' a reality – avoiding provider capture – engaging effectively with users and the public

What are your top three?

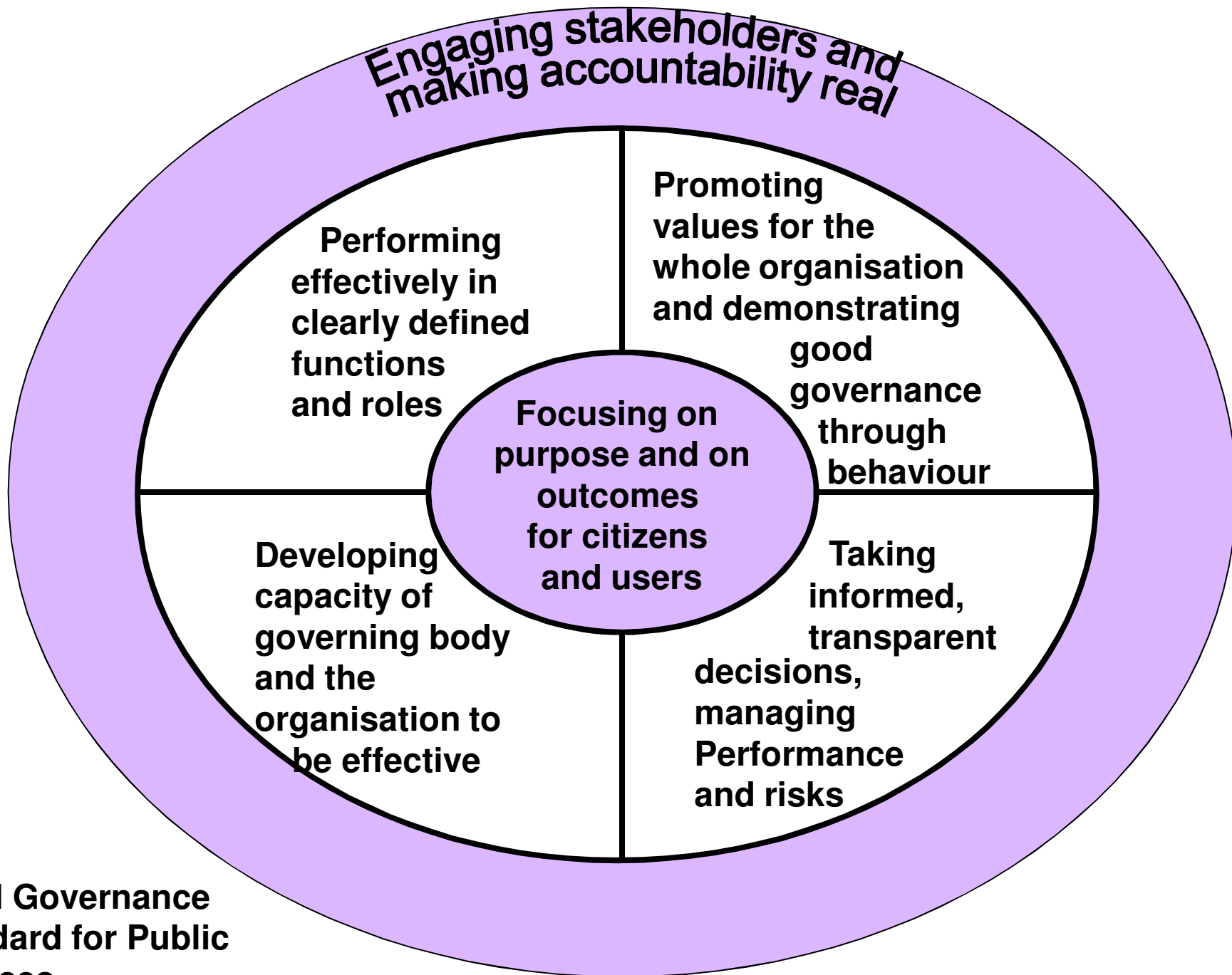
FP The 'Improvement' Landscape: National Level

- Central Government interventions
 - National Policy; National plans; National Service Frameworks; Reviews; Next Step Reviews
 - Ongoing standard setting
 - Ongoing target setting
 - Regulation and Inspection
 - Comprehensive Area Assessment
- Central 'Support Agency' interventions
 - Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government
 - IDEA peer reviews
 - Leadership Academy for Leading Counsellors



Developmental Interventions

- Diagnosis and review:
 - Governance effectiveness
 - Good Governance Standard for Public Services
 - Organisational diagnosis
- 'Classroom' based learning
- Organisational Raids
- Mentoring and Executive coaching
- Open simulation and whole system event
- Action learning



**Good Governance
Standard for Public
Services**



Governance Effectiveness

- Desk Review:
 - Strategy, plans, inspection reports, agendas, minutes etc
- Meeting observation
- On-line self assessment
- 1-1 interviews – including with partners and stakeholders
- Focus Groups
- 360 degree feedback
- Analysis, feedback and action planning

FP Organisational Diagnosis

- A 'process' model – we bring an understanding of the public sector context but are not 'expert' consultants
 - Expertise in processes that uncover organisational issues
 - Expectation that most solutions are held somewhere in the workforce
- Diagnosis
 - Desk review – Strategy, vision, values, HR and workforce plans etc
 - Diagonal slice – 1-1's; focus groups; meeting observation
 - 360 degree feedback
 - Psychometric tools – MBTI; Team roles assessment etc
- Analysis, feedback and intervention

What I've learnt about work role learning?

- Most work role learning is best rooted in real day- to day experiences
- Effective learning involves a cycle of: learn – test – reflect – consolidate – apply
- There is untapped value in 'peer and colleague' learning
- Learning needs to be equal to or greater than the rate of change



Classroom-based Learning

- Courses, conferences, taught programmes
- Tends to be more helpful in imparting knowledge and information than in building skills – be clear and realistic about what you hope to achieve- good ‘diagnosis’ matters
- Approach can enhance the impact on skills and behaviour:
 - Understand learner reality and priorities
 - Keep it interactive
 - Ensure that there is opportunity to ‘practice’
 - Follow up – Repeat - Reinforce
- The big challenge is that people return to the same desk, with the same colleagues, the same routines and yet often we ask this kind of intervention fundamentally to change behaviour
- Classroom based learning has hardly ever (in my experience) had a significant impact on embedded organisational culture
- Classroom based learning has hardly ever (in my experience) produced significant organisational change

FP Organisational Raids

Objective is to learn about approaches to a range of aspects of organisation (leadership; people development etc) from a respected organisation in a different sector

- Preparation: Agree focus; research organisations; In- depth planning; 2 'teams' of 4-6
- Raid day: Opening session – then pair interviews with a diagonal slice of the organisation
- Reflection and diagnosis
- Team feedback: Distil applicable learning for your organisation
- Feedback to the organisation visited.



Individual learning and development

■ Mentoring

- Usually provided by a more Senior and experienced person within the 'sector' but not the specific organisation
- 1-1 confidential meetings every 2-3 months
- Often an emphasis on 'functional' expertise and problem solving
- Useful in career planning (for the individual) and talent management (for the organisation) – ensuring that promising individuals identify and access the development opportunities that they need including doing the right jobs in the right order

How might this be useful for you?



Individual learning and development

- Executive Coaching
 - Usually provided by a trained coach
 - Emphasis on leadership capability
 - 1-1 confidential sessions approximately every 6 weeks
 - Useful in developing personal effectiveness but avoid crossover into 'counselling'
- Typical Process in a coaching session:
 - **Purpose and goal setting:** Agree purpose; outline process; create relaxed atmosphere
 - **The problem/situation:** Exploration; examples; listening; understanding of real issues
 - **Alternatives/possible solutions:** Options; implications (what ifs)
 - **Summary/planning:** Actions, implementation; possible barriers; support needed, measures, timetable
 - **Reviewing:** What happened; learning; feedback; revised plan

FP Spectrum of coaching styles

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Individuals Development level | Unable/ Unwilling/ Insecure | Some skill Willing or confident | Able but unwilling or insecure | Able and willing or confident |
| Solution From | Coach | Coach/learner | Learner/coach | Learner |
| Coaching Style | Tell Instruct | Involve Explain | Support Guide | Facilitate Enable |



How might coaching be useful to you?

Learning for Change: Open Simulation

- Large events designed to help an organisation and their partners and stakeholders 'learn from the future'
- A typical simulation would bring 40 or more people together over 1-2 days to look at the impact of change in the future
- Creates a fictional but realistic context within which new or emerging policies or ways of working can be tested
- They work best in a situation of imminent change
- Within a hypothetical but realistic scenario – participants negotiate with each other to reach what each sees as desirable outcome
- Participants act within their real role but within a simulated reality (so it is NOT a role play)
- They make operational decisions in the face of 'events'
- At key stages participants are asked to move back into this 'reality' and reflect on what has happened and the learning for their real world of organisations

How might this be useful to you?

Action Learning

- For those for whom ‘evidence’ is important - the father of ‘Action Learning’ is Reg Revans who developed the approach and applied it in a very wide range of contexts over 60 years until his sad passing
- It involves small groups (Action Learning Sets) of people in similar roles working together (6-8 people)
- Usually ground rules are set – confidentiality; commitment; process
- It can be facilitated or self-managed. Some sets start out with a facilitator and become self-managing over time
- Meetings are regular – but allow time in between for ‘testing’ of solutions
- Meetings usually a minimum of 3 hours



How does action learning work?

- Sets usually begin with members 'checking in' – a brief description of anything relevant since the group last met – especially an opportunity for anyone who presented a problem last time to report back on what happened. Then the process involves:
 - Describing the problem as we see it
 - Receiving contributions from others in the form of questions, suggestions and feedback
 - Reflecting on our discussion and deciding what action to take
 - Reporting back on what happened when we took action
 - Reflecting on the problem-solving process and how well it is working
- The idea is that everyone is learning all the time – presenting, questioning, active listening, reflecting

How might this be useful for you?

FP Trying out some action learning

- Dan Smit will be the guinea pig – but at ‘warp speed’
- Take 10 minutes to describe the situation
- Set members have 10 minutes to ask questions (NO suggestions or solutions at this point)
- Dan ‘sits out’ of the discussion as set members take 10 minutes to generate options for how to tackle the problem
- Dan invited back in to reflect on what action he might take and to reflect on the process
- Set members and Dan reflect on overall or general learning from the process



Very happy to offer email help and support for anything that you try:

sue@foresight-partnership.co.uk