

4,000 HSE redundancies to be targeted says new CEO

The incoming new chief of the Health Service Executive, (HSE) Tony O'Brien, has announced that up to 4,000 job cuts this year will be targeted redundancies rather than the open-ended redundancy and early-retirement options offered since 2011.

In a presentation to last week's 9th Health Summit at the Croke Park conference centre, Mr O'Brien said that a further 4,000 whole-time equivalents (WTEs) would be cut from the workforce during 2013 on top of the 11,000 job reductions in the health sector since September 2007.

The conference also heard a case study on implementing 'Croke Park' public service changes by developing a leadership programme for managers and supervisors to improve performance and minimise conflict.

Over the past five years the HSE budget has been reduced from €13.8 billion to €11.9bn for 2013. He predicted that health sector employment will be at 98,955 by the end of this year which will be equivalent to the number employed at the end of 2004.

In relation to on-going reforms, Mr O'Brien said that "we will continue with workforce modernisation within the context of the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014 and will develop the shared service programme through the use of contemporary shared service platforms."

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He added that there would be increased use of health economists to measure value for money and societal fairness in health allocations as well as an emphasis on closer working relationships between clinicians and management.

The Health Summit also heard a presentation on major change achieved at Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services in Dublin. The achievement of major reforms under the 'Croke Park' agreement at the Harold's Cross hospice was highlighted to the Health Management Institute (HMI) last year

by Health Minister, Dr James Reilly, as an example of what management and employees could achieve by implementing new work practices and performance management.

The 'Values-Driven Leadership' programme was provided for 95 senior managers, department heads, supervisors and HR team members between 2010 and last year. It resulted in an 85% drop in internal investigations and mediations as well as a smooth launch of performance management and improved internal relationships.

The initiative was managed by the Hospice senior management with the HR director, Audrey Houlihan. The Health Summit heard that its success was down to four key features:

- It was designed internally with **Align Management Solutions** [www.alignmanagement.net] and delivered through the hospital's HR department rather than outsourcing;
- It started with the top team and cascaded through the organisation to maintain standards;
- Personal profiles and working styles analysis was provided to every participant;
- Individual coaching and follow-on networking group sessions embedded the leadership development and best management practices.

The participants heard that the leadership development intervention cost about €1,500 per participant. It led to immediate savings and improved communications and co-operation between departments such as nursing, catering, maintenance, therapists, medical staff, social work and administration/IT.

Dr Mahmood Adil, National Quality & Efficiency Adviser to England's Department of Health, provided examples of costing and assessing best healthcare outcomes by encouraging finance managers and senior clinical staff to work more closely together.

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