

## **CS32: G4S BUSINESS INTEGRATION LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME – THE BIG LEAP**

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### **Context**

In 2009, the UK Government was developing a prison competition programme that would enable private sector companies and the public sector to compete for contracts to run UK prisons. With the change of Government it was clear that this programme was going to grow. G4S, a private company, operated four prisons and wanted to bring together best practice to define 'a G4S prison'. This would provide a clear marketing strategy to help secure future business.

Prison Dialogue (PD) had been working with the CEO of G4S Offender Management (OM) since 2003, when he was Prison Service Area Manager in the south west of England, and in the G4S prison system since 2006, when it was GSL (see CS33). In 2009 PD proposed the Business Integration Leadership programme, the BIG LEAP, to develop talent in Middle Managers in support of senior management succession and to provide organisational learning about system-wide change and integration.

### **Aims and Objectives**

Participants on the BIG LEAP would deliver significant systemic projects that would require them to work across departmental boundaries to address real needs or challenges within their prison. They would learn about and use a participative change approach, Implicate Change (© Dialogue Associates), learn Dialogue Skills to engage effectively with all participants affected by the change, and experience the value of including the voice of the prisoner. The BIG LEAP would provide practical examples of how change can work effectively and learnings about specific initiatives so that the benefits could be applied elsewhere. It would contribute to organisational learning and support the definition of 'a G4S Prison'. This was a serious investment in staff to develop the capacity for change leaders.

### **Method: Activity, Participation and Duration**

Staff who applied for the BIG LEAP were interviewed, and they were required to make a presentation to two Senior Managers about how they would define

a G4S Prison. Seven Middle Managers from the four prisons, sponsored by their Senior Manager, were selected for the programme and asked to lead a change initiative for their prison. The initiatives included setting up a Working Wing, setting up an Older Prisoners unit, establishing quality Personal Officer work, improving the atmosphere and safety on residential units, and understanding how to boost and already high performing prison.

The BIG LEAP ran from January to May 2010. Four workshops were held off-site at the PD Offices. Dialogue skills (Check-in and Check-out, Dialogic Modes, Actions and Practices) and theory (Implicate Change model ©Dialogue Associates) were introduced and applied to the change initiatives. It challenged the participants' thinking at times. For example, the first phase of Implicate Change is to *Identify the Need and/or Opportunity* and participants struggled to do that rather than advocate the presumed solution. Participants left with a plan of what they would do next, whom they would engage and how, in order to progress their change initiatives. Before the next workshop, PD would visit them on-site to support the delivery of the intervention, provide coaching, and meet with their sponsoring senior manager. Each participant was required to write a Case Study about how they were putting theory into practice, what they were trying to do, what they did and what happened. They added to the Case Study each step of the way as they made progress with the initiative.

At the BIG LEAP Graduation Ceremony in May 2010 the participants presented their Case Studies to their Senior Management sponsors, two of the Prison Directors and the OM Operational Director. They were met with good acknowledgement and sincere appreciation for their work.

### **Outcomes**

Each of the prisons gained from the progress that their initiative made using a participative approach, involving prisoners, staff, managers, community and other G4S stakeholders for an effective result. G4S OM had five in-depth case studies for reference by their other prisons:

LIFE ON THE UNIT – Look Back to the Future, HMP Wolds

BACK TO THE FUTURE – a Working Partnership, HMP Altcourse

THE BIG STEP FORWARD – the Future is Ours, HMP Rye Hill

GENERATION X – Dignity and Respect for Older Prisoners, HMP & YOI Parc

THE MECHANICS OF THE WORKING WING – HMP & YOI Parc

The Case Studies could be used immediately by other prisons and by the Business development Team in bid writing for Prison contracts.

The BIG LEAP participants shared their knowledge and experiences about operations in their prison and took the learning back. There was an integration of thinking among them.

The participants also raised their individual profiles in the prison since they had reported directly to their Senior Management Team, and had engaged in-depth with other departments who appreciated the opportunity to participate.

## **Learning**

The participants learned how to work with Dialogue Skills and Dialogic Change and the impact of doing so. One participant said: *“if you use models like Implicate Change in an ordered fashion... not just two people agree something and it comes in the next day, without really being thought through and thinking what the pitfalls could be”*.

The OM Operations Manager learned the value of bringing representatives from across all of the prisons together to develop system-wide thinking, and established a number of groupings to work on Operational Themes such as Resettlement and Safer Custody.

PD learned the value of writing case studies to engage participants in their learning, ground learning in action, put Dialogue theory into local language, and make best practice accessible to others. Rather than replicating the end result, the case studies allow others to follow the method, thereby enabling a locally tailored solution to emerge from a top-down requirement.