



NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Establishes Succession Program by Partnering with Positive People Development and **Assess Systems**



Scotland's largest National Health Service (NHS) Board, Greater Glasgow and Clyde provides high-quality, comprehensive healthcare services for the improvement of overall health in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde area. Serving a population of 1.2 million, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde employs approximately 38,000 individuals and encompasses 35 hospitals, as well as numerous dental practices, optician offices, health clinics and pharmacies.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde was formed eight years ago by merging five smaller hospital boards into a single-board system. With the creation of the larger organisation, decision-makers have made concerted efforts to develop and strengthen senior-level leaders in order to build a cohesive group that will drive ongoing success for this vital hospital system.



Systematic Method for Measuring Competencies

Shortly after the formation of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, its organisational development (OD) team began to refine the critical competencies for senior-level leaders. The team sought assistance with its approach to evaluating leaders with respect to the competencies. “We were looking for a more systematic way to measure that set of competencies with our leadership cohort,” said Juli McQueen, head of organisational development, corporate services at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

When looking for an outside vendor, one firm Juli’s team considered was Positive People Development, a local OD, leadership and coaching consultancy. Jan Bethune, director of Positive People Development and an **Assess Systems** Distributor in the U.K., offered not only expert knowledge in leadership development, but also versatile, comprehensive assessment solutions Juli’s team could use from **Assess Systems**.

“We wanted to make the talent planning framework more mainstream and robust,” said Juli. “Jan had a good grasp of what we were trying to achieve and was able to work with us to develop what we have today.” On an ongoing basis, Jan’s organisation provides support and assessment services for NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde’s top 500 leaders. Jan uses **Assess Systems** products — including **Assess360** and **Assess** personality — in the recruitment and selection process and for development.

Urgent Need to Establish a Succession Pipeline

Several years ago, it came to the attention of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde’s OD team that many senior-level

executives would soon retire. Individuals with comparable abilities either were not coming up through the ranks, or they were being lured away by other opportunities. Simultaneously, changes in the public sector indicated there could be difficulties finding the right talent.

According to Catriona Renfrew, director of corporate planning and policy at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, “We recognised that we needed a talent management program, and this was reinforced by an inability to fill a number of senior posts. When we advertised posts both internally and externally, we weren’t always getting the quality of candidates we needed. Our talent plan was to identify people with real potential and develop our internal talent using a properly structured program as an investment.”

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde had been providing professional development for its senior people, but a tighter focus was needed to target success factors required at the senior level. It was time to define the characteristics of future leaders and start developing individuals toward leadership posts to deepen and broaden NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde’s bench strength.

Solution: Assessment-Based Succession Program Called FastTrack

Having received the sign-off for a succession program from the corporate management team, Juli worked with Jan to develop the program’s structure and procedures. The two established success models outlining the key levels of knowledge, skills and behaviours to be replicated in potential incumbents.

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Four comprehensive models were created: senior-level general manager, top-level general manager, top-level professional (such as human resource and finance)

manager and top senior clinical manager. Senior directors examined the models and nominated individuals who were either progressing toward the characteristics in the models or already had begun to resemble tomorrow's leaders. The corporate management team then selected individuals for the program.

Positive People Development: A Valued Assess Systems Distributor

At **Assess Systems**, we value our relationships with our chosen representatives around the world. We are extremely pleased to partner with Positive People Development in the U.K. We take great pride in having reputable experts like Jan Bethune, director of Positive People Development, represent us to their clients.

Positive People Development has been a Distributor for seven years. "**Assess Systems** provides comprehensive products that give me a range of development solutions. I like the fact that we can map what's important in an organisation against a robust product," said Jan. "I also appreciate the support and engagement I get from my key partners at **Assess Systems**. When I have a business opportunity, a suggestion or a problem and reach out, they're most helpful. It's a good partnership built on mutual trust and respect. We present ideas and work on solutions together."

"Our relationship with Positive People Development is an important enhancement to our own direct business in the United States. By extending our reach worldwide through distributorships, we can more effectively fulfill our mission of empowering our clients to hire the best and develop their full potential. We're delighted to see this taking place in countries around the world through our global Distributors," said Aylin Basom, VP, strategic channels at **Assess Systems**. "Our longstanding partnership with Jan has given us the privilege of working with one of the most talented consultants in the field. We are also proud to have NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde as a world-class client in our user group."

"The assessment material was built on what we had already done through **Assess Systems**," said Juli. "The senior-level leadership model is used in the recruitment of our director-level posts, and it seemed logical to map that to people who aspired to be promoted."

The program, called FastTrack, was launched about six months after the initial sign-off. "We built into the process

individuals' career aspirations and the needs of future roles," Juli stated. "Jan helped us develop the profile, and we were able to discover competencies people perhaps were not using but would be valuable in the future."

Each participant began with **Assess360** and **Assess** personality to evaluate their characteristics against the models. Development plans emerged, reflecting the 360 feedback. The participants began focusing on the very specific, well defined competencies identified in their plans. "Some people were self-starters who did their own development, while others waited for the team to create a development program for them," said Catriona. "The majority put a huge amount into it and got a huge amount out of it."

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's OD team increased its return on investment by using FastTrack to identify key areas for corporate development, such as resilience, influencing and negotiating. In particular, resilience in times of change, conflict and setbacks was a significant challenge at the senior-leader level. The team orchestrated master classes and workshops for individual needs and to improve the group's capabilities as a whole.

Evaluations to Measure Progress

After 12 months, Jan and the team re-evaluated the FastTrack participants by using **Focus360**. This focused assessment measured only the specific competencies individuals had been actively working on during the year, targeting feedback around improvements made. In addition to using **Focus360**, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde conducted an evaluation of the FastTrack program itself.

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The group had progressed most in the areas of in-depth problem solving and championing change. Growth also occurred in relationship management skills and the ability to engage with others in the organisation. Most

participants rated driving for results as their biggest area of achievement. They were much better at identifying actions to take and ways to work with peers to bring about positive outcomes.



Participants were energized by the fact that they could see progress. It was clear that development was not just something they experienced for themselves, because others could see growth as well. Sometimes managers noticed progress that the participants themselves weren't aware of.

"Line managers saw positive improvements and have all recognised an increased confidence in individuals and progress towards readiness for future posts. The role of line managers in helping individuals identify development needs and undertake activities to support development has been pivotal," said Juli. "In addition, individuals who have networked for the first time found it to be incredibly valuable."

"Participants worked well together across the organisation, which has been a real strength," Catriona said. "People have learned from each other and gotten experience with what was happening in the organisation because the groups were from different functions."

Positive Results and Continued Growth

Development was not just handed to the participants. They needed to commit, get engaged and address their challenges. Some drove hard and set the bar very high.

The group appreciated the support and learning. They were also grateful to have time to reflect on their current activities, what was required for the organisation's future, where the gaps were and what development should occur to fill them.

"The participants are definitely becoming more confident. They're thinking much more rigorously about the type of development they need. We're also beginning to think more rigorously about how we develop people for the needs of the organisation, not just for individuals," said Juli. "The growth allows participants to cascade a broader range of capabilities down through the organisation. We're trying to not only establish capabilities through FastTrack, but also to broaden them by using senior-level participants to extend them to their teams."

The intense FastTrack experience — including one-on-one support, master classes, group interaction, project work and other activities — makes for a tremendous journey that yields valuable improvements.

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"Participants who put the most into FastTrack have gotten a lot out of it in terms of their development, and there's evidence of that as they go forward for posts," said Catriona. "We're the biggest health organisation by far in Scotland, so improving and strengthening our talent management capabilities is a recruitment advantage for us. External talent sources are weakening, so FastTrack's impact has become increasingly important."

Ongoing Process of Strengthening the Succession Pipeline

Talent management and succession planning are new initiatives in Scotland's public sector. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's ground-breaking work is setting an important standard.

"For the next two to three years, we'll continue building the FastTrack principles," said Juli. "FastTrack will continue to benefit us because of workforce demographic issues that mainly surface as people retire. Also, by growing our options around developing people, we have additional opportunities to find the right candidate for a post. People outside NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde with

public sector and health systems knowledge don't exist in great numbers. Very few health boards have the size and complexity of ours, so in some ways we are unique in our needs."

In addition to continuing the FastTrack program for the first group of participants, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde will start another FastTrack group later in the year. The nomination process will be supported by an assessment centre and a development planning approach. "People who are unsuccessful will still get assessment centre output they can use for their own personal development work, making it more positive for those who are not selected for the program," said Catriona.



Value of Collaborative Partnerships

The FastTrack succession program, as well as the selection and development strategies that help strengthen NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, could not be possible without the highly effective, collaborative partnerships linking NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Positive People Development and **Assess Systems**. In her role as director of Positive People Development, Jan contributes longstanding expertise, a deep knowledge of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, the objectivity of an outside consultant and extensive experience with **Assess Systems**' products.

"The most important thing for me is the flexibility we have with Jan and Positive People Development," said Juli. "Jan and I have consistently worked very closely together to produce some fine work."

According to Juli, **Assess Systems**' products have enabled NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde to establish a reliable solution set and systematic approach that have been very pragmatic. "Line managers recognise the **Assess Systems** feedback as a baseline for discussion that

includes comprehensive data so they can build on an individual's strengths and have informed conversations about development," she said.

She is also pleased with the way the assessments reveal potential in a candidate who might not have had opportunities to demonstrate it. "**Assess Systems** provides a systematic and informed approach that makes the senior-level recruitment process much more rigorous," said Juli. "What is particularly good is that it dovetails into what the successful candidate needs for development. A candidate who takes an assessment for recruitment gets feedback that determines development consistent with the competencies we're working toward as an organisation."



At Positive People Development, we are passionate about helping organisations and individuals operate effectively and reach their full potential. We believe everyone has or can acquire the elements necessary for achieving success, and our role is to support this process. Our key areas of business include organisational development and change; development for leaders, managers and individuals; assessment-based development; recruitment, selection and succession planning; human resource consulting; and coaching and mentoring. We act with confidentiality and sensitivity. Our clients span private, public, voluntary and third-sector organisations.

Positive People Development is an authorised Distributor of **Assess Systems** in the United Kingdom.

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