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# EVALUATION OF PSMW'S SUMMER SCHOOL 2009

Report of Findings

Public Services Management Wales

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## CONTENTS

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1	INTRODUCTION, METHODOLOGY AND RATIONALE .....	2
2	RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	4
2.1	Impact on the Participant .....	4
2.2	Delivery of the Summer School Outcome .....	10
2.3	Organisational Outcomes .....	11
2.4	Sustainability and Spread of Changes .....	12
2.5	Return on Investment.....	15
3	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	16
	APPENDIX I   Methodological approach and principal outcomes.....	18
	APPENDIX II   Delegate interview indicative questions .....	19
	APPENDIX III   Manager/colleague survey questions .....	21

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SCOPE OF REPORT

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Thanks are due to Jo Carruthers of Public Services Management Wales (PSMW) for commissioning this study and providing direction at the outset. As with any such research project, this study was only possible thanks to the contributions of the participants – in this case a sample of 20 participants from PSMW’s Summer School held at University of Wales Lampeter in June 2009. Their willing engagement with the study, openness and honesty is gratefully acknowledged.

The report uses a qualitative approach to derive a series of conclusions and recommendations about how Summer School might be amended in the future. These are based solely on our interpretation of the evidence presented to us by the respondents. As such the views offered here are entirely our own and any errors of interpretation are solely due to the authors. We trust that the independent analysis of the responses will help to ensure that Summer School continues to speak to the challenges facing public and third sector managers in Wales, and to their sponsor organisations.

Dr Mark Llewellyn and Amy Simpson  
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# 1 INTRODUCTION, METHODOLOGY AND RATIONALE

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## 1.1 Introduction

PSMW's Summer School is a week-long programme for public and third sector managers, which in 2009 was held at University of Wales Lampeter. For the first time this year, delegates were explicitly asked to identify a Summer School Outcome (SSO) which was intended to forge a link between the theoretical and practical, so that when they returned to the workplace they were skilled to deliver against a specific target that they had identified. Approximately 200 delegates attended Summer School in 2009.

## 1.2 Methodology and Rationale

We undertook a multi-level evaluation of the programme which measured impacts at five different levels (see Appendix I which describes the principal outcomes from the research and their relation to the levels of evaluation below):

Level 1 – Impact for the participant

Level 2 – Delivery of the outcome and its impact on the citizen

Level 3 – Organisational outcomes, both for the service and the individual

Level 4 – Sustainability and spread of the changes delivered by the outcome

Level 5 – Return on investment

In order to achieve this, our approach was to interview approximately 10% of Summer School delegates, along with inviting as many of their managers and colleagues who would be able to perceive a difference in their performance to fill in an online survey as part of the research process. We undertook two interviews with each of the Summer School delegates – one in the few weeks after returning to work from Summer School (baseline), and a second interview three months after Summer School (review) in order to analyse changes made and sustained over a period of time.

### Individual in-depth interviews with delegates

Given the need to conduct the interviews in a relatively short space of time, they were undertaken over the telephone and each lasted approximately 30 minutes. Delegates were provided with the questions which formed the core part of the interview in advance of the interview taking place. Baseline interviews focused on Level 1 and Level 2 activity and were used to assess the immediate impact of Summer School, and the likely outcomes for delegates and the citizens to whom they provide services. The review interview assessed the actual or recorded impact of the change through analysis of activity undertaken by focusing on Levels 1, 2, 4 and 5.

Delegates were assured that their interviews would be undertaken in confidence, and that whilst individual comments may be included in the final report, they would always be anonymous. Of the 20 delegates interviewed at baseline, we were able to interview 17 at the review stage. Table 1 below describes from which sector respondents came and has three shaded cells – this indicates that we interviewed one fewer person from each of these in the review interviews than at baseline. Questions asked at baseline and review are included as Appendix II.

**Table 1 |** Sample of delegates

		Sector						Total
		Civil Service	Third Sector	Health	Local Authority	Education	Fire and Police	
Management level	Junior			1	2		1	4
	Middle	1	3	4	3	1		12
	Senior		2		2			4
	Total	1	5	5	7	1	1	20

### Online survey for managers and colleagues

We also invited delegates to nominate two others – whether managers and/or colleagues – to fill in a questionnaire about them at baseline and review periods. The survey was hosted online and 28 respondents completed it at baseline (12 managers and 16 colleagues) and exactly half of these submitted a response in the review phase. Similarly to the delegates, the questionnaire focused on four key areas: delivery of the SSO (Level 2); organisational outcomes (Level 3); sustainability and spread of the changes delivered by the SSO (Level 4); and return on investment (Level 5). Appendix III contains the questions asked in the survey at baseline and review.

### Analysis and reporting

Appropriate analytical strategies were employed based on the nature of the data from the interviews and surveys. None of the answers were weighted as more significant than any others; all views are therefore equal in terms of their importance in this report.

Hereafter we review the sentiments and judgements of the evaluation respondents according to the specific questions put to them. Verbatim quotations are used to capture recurrent, or otherwise resonant, points of view. WIHSC does not necessarily endorse the opinions in question – quotations are only used to portray viewpoints accurately and clearly. While quotations are used, the report is obviously not a verbatim transcript but an interpretative summary of the themes and issues raised by respondents through the consultation process. So whilst encapsulating the main themes and highlighting the key points, this report seeks to be faithful to what was submitted by the individuals. Throughout, the report presents a number of Case Studies to vividly capture viewpoints that are particularly worthy of close attention. They are all from our respondents and relate in detail to points mentioned in the text.

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## 2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

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The structure of the findings section mirrors that of the methodological approach and principal outcomes as described in the table at Appendix I. Evidence is provided at these five levels. The length of each of the sections below relative to one another is a useful proxy for the impact that Summer School has as reported by our sample of respondents – the longer the section, the greater the impact.

### 2.1 Impact on the Participant

#### Getting to Summer School

The majority of delegates were deemed appropriate for Summer School for the following reasons, as listed in the survey completed by managers and colleagues:

- they were leading in a particularly difficult situation or period of change;
- the course was an opportunity for them to develop general management skills; and/or
- because they had shown willingness to progress and develop.

There does not appear to be a common engagement or selection process for Summer School. The formality and vigour of the process differed significantly between organisations. Some delegates discovered information about the course themselves, either through networking or through advertisements, and then nominated themselves. Others received an email/bulletin from their organisation, and were asked to register their interest. The selection process ranged from informal chats with line managers, to a more formal procedure involving central personnel and training staff.

To illustrate the variance, in one NHS trust, a generic email was sent to all managers and senior managers inviting applications. Submitted applications were screened, and final selections were made by the training and recruitment committee. In another organisation, Summer School was selected by the delegate themselves, not necessarily because of the relevance of the material to their role, but to meet their annual training requirements.

#### Networking

Summer School brought together a range of managers and leaders and the five day residential programme enabled participants to network, raise the profiles of their own work and organisation among others, and share experiences and learning. For many this was regarded as *“one of the real plus points of Summer School”*. Overall the feedback regarding networking was mainly positive; delegates found it beneficial to converse with others who worked across sectors, but who were facing similar issues to them. One respondent commented:

*“[you] tend to be focused on your own field...of work...[it’s] good to see problems aren’t confined to your particular field...[it’s] good to see how others are dealing with that”*

Respondents described the networking and support as refreshing. People brought different experiences to the table and learnt from each other, in both a formal and informal setting – one noted that *“every conversation was worthwhile”*. Some delegates felt they had gained a better understanding of the public services available in Wales, through the people they met and the discussions they held.

It emerged from the interviews that respondents were already using, or planned to use the contacts they had made at Summer School. Individuals commented on pieces of work they were planning to pursue with other Summer School delegates. Others felt they had begun to think about working in new and different ways. It was also noted that the links they had made may help to prevent the duplication of work and effort across Wales. Perhaps on a less formal basis, some people felt they would be able to contact others, who are dealing with similar issues, for support in the future.

## Networking | Case Studies

Two delegates, one from the voluntary sector, and one from a Local Authority, have come together to create a paper on effective Community Engagement within Monmouthshire. The short paper looks to trial specific guidelines and standards within the local authority.

One respondent is now a member of a 'learning set', who will meet twice a year to take forward some of the learning from Summer School. Members of the group met at Summer School, and are from various sectors and organisations including, higher education, education, WAG, NHS, and environment and economy. They have discussed providing informal workshops within each others organisations to disseminate some of the learning from Summer School.

One person had made a lot of contacts at Summer School, and felt they were now more 'outward' looking. Networking and learning from other people in similar situations made them realise they are 'all in the same boat' within public services, and that there was no need to 'reinvent the wheel'.

Similarly, another delegate commented that it was useful to get out and meet people, and gain a greater understanding of public services in Wales. They noted that people were often stuck in their own little bubbles, and it was useful to see, and share experiences in order to reduce duplication.

A minority of participants did not gain from the networking, as most did. One participant felt that the closed nature of grouped tables limited the interaction with the cohort of people. It was suggested that perhaps, too many people from the same departments were attending, who were likely to 'stick together'. Three participants felt that they did not benefit from the networking because the majority of attendees were not from their sector, or they had different management responsibilities. Two participants suggested that it would have been beneficial to see a delegate list prior to attendance.

## Relevance of learning

Delegates were asked to create a specific organisational outcome as their individual SSO. Respondents had submitted their broad development aims and learning objectives in their application forms, and these were often not in tune with the SSO which became the focus of much of the week. The majority found it difficult to create a specific SSO at the beginning of the programme, and some felt it even narrowed their learning. Further, some delegates suggested this exercise would have been easier to complete either before attending, or towards the end of the week to develop an action plan based on their learning.

Most people reflected on their learning in a broader sense, rather than in relation to their specific SSO. In order to capture this in the interview respondents were asked to classify their learning at the Summer School into three categories: learning that was directly relevant to their role, learning that would be likely to be relevant in the next 2/3 years as their role develops, and learning that

had no direct relevance to their role at all. 15 of the delegates felt able to quantify their learning in this way and the results are shown below:

**Table 2 |** Relevance of learning from Summer School (%)

	Directly relevant to my role	Likely to be relevant to role in next 2/3 years	No direct relevance to my current role
	50	50	0
	80	15	5
	40	50	10
	60	30	10
	80	15	5
	70	30	0
	70	20	10
	45	55	0
	60	30	10
	90	10	0
	60	30	10
	60	30	10
	10	35	55
	70	30	0
	40	50	10
Average (%)	<b>59</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>9</b>

On average, respondents attributed nearly three-fifths of the learning from Summer School as directly relevant to their role. In a minority of cases, delegates did not feel the content of Summer School was applicable to their role, either because of the organisation they worked for, or the position they held. This figure was inflated by one respondent who judged that over half of their learning fell into this category – a proportion significantly out of line with others.

As noted above five of the 20 respondents did not answer the question in this format. These five found it difficult to attribute a percentage for the first two categories, as they felt they could not separate them out or they were unsure what their role would be in the next 2-3 years. Of these five, four attributed 95% or 100% of their learning across the first two categories. The fifth said only 15% of the learning from Summer School was relevant to their role, or likely to be relevant in the next 2-3 years, again providing an answer dissimilar to the majority of others.

In the review phase of interviews, delegates were asked to reflect back on this question. They were asked about the learning they felt was directly relevant to their role, and specifically how much were they able to use on a weekly basis, how much of it they used less frequently than each week, and how much they have not had a chance to use yet. Whereas some were able to refer to specific tools and techniques they used on a regular basis, the majority referred to a general raised awareness of the ‘overarching principles’, and ‘broadened horizons’. In these cases, individuals found it hard to quantify how often they were using their Summer School learning. One person said they were now more mindful of change and turbulent times, and they adopted this ethos on a daily basis as their organisation underwent change. Another referred to their greater self awareness: *“the more you think about yourself, the more change you bring about”*.

Some respondents had not yet had the chance to use all of their learning in the workplace. One such person noted that their organisation was too busy at present, with low staff numbers, and they had not had a chance to sit and reflect on their learning. Others had significant projects or plans in the pipeline.

## **Skills and Tools**

Facilitated groups formed part of each day at the Summer School. There were common threads emerging in the feedback of these workshops. Delegates gave positive comments about the groups and the facilitators, but felt they were perhaps too structured around the SSO, and often did not relate directly to the course content that day. They suggested a balance was needed between learning, discussion and reflection and felt the facilitated groups would have been a more beneficial component of the course if there were an arena for digesting and reflecting upon the day's learning:

*"[we] should have been asked to reflect on the day...and come up with a list of what we could apply our learning to...it was bigger than one outcome"*

Many respondents made reference to the usefulness of the wide range of tools and techniques they were given over the course. The five most common tools and techniques mentioned were as follows: NLP, Wicked Problems, Transformational Conversations, Mentoring and Coaching, and Meditation.

Some people commented that the sessions only gave delegates a short taster of the tools and techniques, but inspired them to research into further training and courses. For example, one person noted that the Summer School had *"sparked enthusiasm for learning"* and they had decided to take up coaching, and look into degree courses. Another commented that a list of trainers or courses for the different localities would be useful, so that attendees could follow up the taster sessions which interested them. In the interviews, many respondents were able to give examples of tools and techniques they were adopting in the workplace, many of which they were adopting with their staff in a shared process.

Although many respondents were able to make reference to tools and techniques they used on a regular basis in the review interviews, it was also evident that over time, some of the learning was lost: *"[I am] not sure now, it seems like a long time ago...[it's] hard to remember what I learnt to be honest"*. One delegate felt they were overwhelmed by the number of tools and techniques at the Summer School, and they had now all *"merged into one"*. They felt that *"less would have been more"*, and the Summer School should have focused on a few key tools. Others stated that the research interviews undertaken as part of this evaluation, offered an opportunity to go back to notes and reflect on their learning at Summer School.

A minority of respondents felt that the lectures and sessions at Summer School were too generic. One person commented that *"if you weren't aware of these themes, perhaps you shouldn't be managers"*. It was also evident that some of the content of the Summer School overlapped with the content of the MBA. Those who had done an MBA felt they already knew many of the tools and techniques that were outlined. However one delegate, who had completed an MBA, said they had got something out of watching people try out the techniques at Summer School.



## Using tools and techniques in the workplace | Case Studies

### *Baseline*

One respondent used the solution focused approach to problem solving in meetings. They ignored the problems and focused on what should be happening, and what it should look like and they commented that the technique was simple and very effective.

One delegate plans to use the 5Ws tool in the future restructuring of services, commenting that it provided a *“new way of looking at problems which was really useful”*

One respondent has had a transformation conversation with every member of staff in their team, and found it to be very effective.

Following an example in one workshop, a delegate is now giving crystals out as praise to their team at work. The participant has noticed an improved atmosphere within their team.

### *Review*

One person is using the Solution Focused approach to problem solving on a regular basis. They note that it ‘flips’ the feeling of meetings, and has saved them hours.

One respondent has developed a coaching and mentoring system within their team. There are now others within the organisation who are interested in the scheme and they are looking to develop it further.

## **Balancing personal and organisational development**

When asked, respondents felt that the balance between personal and organisational development within Summer School was rather difficult to quantify, and it varied considerably: *“if you go in with an open mind, you can get out of [Summer School] what you want”*. Of the 17 people who felt they could directly answer the question on this balance, 15 felt that Summer School provided the right balance for them.

Some commented that personal and organisational development were not mutually exclusive and so they found the question particularly difficult to answer: *“my personal development has a direct impact on my organisation”*. Table 3 below lists the responses given, and demonstrates a fairly close match between the perceived balance as it was at Summer School, and that which respondents felt should be at Summer School – around a 50:50 split.

Many of the respondents referred to ‘softer management skills’ which they had learned from Summer School. These softer skills can be regarded as having impacts on both personal and organisational development. They are about engaging with people, conversations, listening skills, emotional intelligence and so on. In this sense they could be regarded as personal skills. However, participants also felt they were vital in change management, vital in dealing with individuals and staff relationships through organisational change. As one person stated:

*“the softer skills I have learned...as well as the project management techniques, have helped me a great deal”*

**Table 3 | Balance between organisational and personal development – delegates (%)**

	Balance as it was		Balance as it should be	
	Organisational	Personal	Organisational	Personal
	60	40	30	70
	35	65	35	65
	60	40	60	40
	60	40	60	40
	75	25	40	60
	40	60	40	60
	50	50	50	50
	50	50	50	50
	0	100	0	100
	50	50	50	50
	75	25	75	25
	100	0	100	0
	30	70	30	70
	50	50	50	50
	70	30	70	30
	60	40	60	40
	0	100	0	100
Average (%)	50.9	49.1	47.1	52.9

**Added Value**

As well as the advantages of networking, and the use of tools and skills, the majority of respondents also made significant references to additional outcomes. For example, people highly regarded the time out from their day-to-day work to reflect. Delegates felt more enthusiastic, more focused and refreshed on their return to work. One person noted that *“it feels like I have had an oil change...a chance to think about work, without having the distraction of work”*. In review interviews, respondents were asked to list three specific examples of how they or their organisation had benefited from Summer School. They reported an increase in self confidence and self assurance, a greater sense of individual credibility, a more focused approach to work and being much more receptive to ideas.

Some respondents relished the opportunity to try new things, and their appetite to learn had increased: *“[I] tried things I wouldn’t normally do...using parts of the brain I don’t normally use”*. Some were overwhelmed by the quality of Summer School, and were very complimentary: *“inspirational...best value at its best...I am overwhelmed by it”*, and *“highest standard of training for 20 years. [It’s] had the most profound effect on my work, more than any other training”*. For other who felt they had not learnt new things as such, Summer School offered an opportunity to refresh their ideas and reinforce the way they were currently doing things.

## 2.2 Delivery of the Summer School Outcome

Summer School delegates were asked to focus their learning on one specific organisational outcome – the SSO. It was evident from the interviews that designing an SSO was a difficult task, and they were often not in tune with original objectives and learning achievements. Many recognised that their application and their desired outcomes were not as specific as the course would have wished:

*“on reflection I did not structure my application as well as I could have because I didn’t actually know what was expected”*

One person listed 12 outcomes on their application, but claims they did not get a chance to refer back to these because the whole process was driven towards the one specific SSO. One respondent noted that *“[it] devalued the whole summer school learning...trying to fit things that didn’t really fit at all”*.

Many commented on their struggle to define a specific work problem. As one participant noted, they were rushed into putting something on paper. Many delegates found it difficult to apply some of the processes they had learnt throughout the week to a particular, less tangible outcome. Consequently, in the interviews, many participants discussed very broad SSOs such as ‘change management’, ‘maintaining and building effective partnerships’, or ‘management and leadership skills’. Some respondents felt the ‘Quad of Aims’ task (to develop an SSO) was useful, however was expected too early on in the Summer School. Respondents felt they would have benefited from having more time to consolidate their learning. A minority of people, however, found the SSO they devised at Summer School useful, as it gave them *“something defined that we could really work towards”*.

### Delivering the SSO | Case Studies

#### *Summer School Outcome (SSO)*

#### *Learning in relation to delivering the SSO*

#### *Delivery of the SSO*

Increasing patient flow within the hospital

Use of specific tools - 5Ys and problem solving techniques, spheres of influence, transformational conversations

More structured and focused project

Change Management

Softer generic skills - NLP, emotional intelligence, coaching and mentoring

Able to deal with staff issues in a more effective way. Improved day to day interactions. Introducing mentoring and coaching into the team

Functioning with reduced staffing levels

Toolkit to work with. New ways of problem solving

Staff restructured to have a specific role in different areas of work, as well as normal work duties

It is difficult to distinguish between the learning outcomes that were relevant to SSOs, and the learning that was not relevant to SSOs. For example, many participants noted greater confidence as an outcome which helped them achieve their SSO, but has also had a profound effect on other aspects of their work. Others had such a broad SSO that all learning outcomes related in some way. It was the whole package of benefits which became the focus of many of the interviews, rather than on their learning in relation to delivering a specific outcome or task, within their organisation.

### 2.3 Organisational Outcomes

As noted above, it was particularly difficult to distinguish between organisational outcomes and personal outcomes in the interviews. Partly because often an organisational SSO did not form the basis of the learning for the majority of the participants, and partly because many felt that the personal and organisational developments were mutually inclusive. For example, delegates referred to many ‘soft’ management skills, which required significant changes to their persona and their approach, in order to deal with situations in their organisations. Some respondents were taking on some of the techniques in their personal time which was having a profound effect on their conduct.

Most of the material above has come from the interviews with Summer School delegates, but the following analysis is drawn from the surveys completed by the managers and colleagues of these individuals. When asked, managers and colleagues felt that Summer School placed more emphasis on the personal development of delegates, and felt this should have been more balanced with organisational development. Table 4 lists all answers given by colleagues and managers in response:

**Table 4 |** Balance between organisational and personal development – managers/colleagues (%)

	Balance as it was		Balance as it should be	
	Organisational	Personal	Organisational	Personal
	10	90	20	80
	20	80	30	70
	20	80	30	70
	25	75	30	70
	30	70	40	60
	30	70	40	60
	30	70	40	60
	30	70	45	55
	30	70	50	50
	40	60	50	50
	40	60	50	50
	40	60	50	50
	45	55	50	50
	50	50	50	50
	50	50	50	50
	50	50	50	50
	50	50	50	50
	50	50	50	50
	60	40	50	50
Average (%)	36.84	63.16	43.42	56.58

On average, managers and colleagues felt 63.2% of the programme focused on personal development, although they thought that the future balance of Summer School should be more evenly weighted – with personal development at 55.2% and organisational development at 44.8%.

In the baseline surveys, managers and colleagues were asked to state what the organisation hoped to achieve by sending the participant on Summer School. Answers were quite general, with references to *“improved skills”*, *“improved efficiency”*, *“new and fresh ideas”*, and *“improved partnership working”*. Further, managers and colleagues were asked what they had observed in the delegates since Summer School. Although many felt it was too early to comment, others were aware of changes:

*“appears re-energised and re-focused”*

*“more level headed...more aware of what is going on around them”*

*“renewed vigour and enthusiasm to get on and deal with difficult and challenging issues...this week has given them the opportunity to re-charge the batteries and get on with the task in hand”*

That said, the majority of respondents were unable to identify any outcomes for the organisation in the baseline surveys. However, more were able to do so in the review surveys – one for example noted that: *“[they have] increased enthusiasm for joint working and collaboration, and new methods of working have been introduced. There is always a different option if one thing fails”*.

In addition in the review surveys, managers and colleagues were asked to identify three outcomes that they had seen since Summer School either for the individual or for the organisation. Eight of the 13 respondents were able to identify such specific benefits – two were only able to give one benefit, and two were not able to comment on any. Responses are reproduced on the following page.

25 of the 28 (89.3%) managers and colleagues who responded to the baseline survey suggested they would recommend Summer School to others – a higher proportion (13 of the 14 or 92.9%) in the review survey said they would make such a recommendation. Reasons for this included:

- Opportunity to network
- Professional development
- Personal development (inc. confidence, time for reflection and inspiration)
- Increased understanding of wider picture
- Greater understanding of leadership issues
- Powerful subjects and speakers

## **2.4 Sustainability and Spread of Changes**

Many of the SSOs were so broad, that the learning is inevitably sustainable. For example, some respondents related their SSO to ‘change management’. The skills learned and adopted will form an integral part of their management role, both now and in the future. As discussed previously, Summer School had a huge impact on ‘softer’ management skills, which respondents report to be transferable beyond any project, post, or organisation. Many of these skills focused on personal changes and development. As a couple of participants noted, *“the change starts in me”*.

## How have your colleague and/or your organisation benefited from Summer School? | Examples

Reinforcement of continual need to work through challenges during difficult times – result will take longer to achieve but will get there eventually

Increased support and development opportunities identified for staff managed by the officer

Reinvigorated my colleague and strengthened need to lead through difficult times

Appears to have a wider range of strategies for dealing with difficult situations

Better motivation skills

Improvement in hitting targets/goals

Insight into team management tools/skills

Greater understanding of why decisions are taken

Greater confidence

Wider awareness of how role fits into bigger picture

Positive new plans created and presentation to be given to Board members

More progressive management approach to change agenda

Confidence in employing new skills – turning a group meeting that was full of negative points of view into one where a positive forward action plan was accomplished

Earlier decision making

More effective communication and networking

Greater understanding of context

Higher quality reports

Wider network outside health and increased confidence

Successfully resolved a potentially damaging dispute between two colleagues

Meet people from other organisations and share new ideas and experience

Improved confidence

More willing to work in partnership

Can cope with stress and difficulties better

Tackling service redesign and modernisation

Increased support and development opportunities identified for staff managed by the officer

Empowering staff within the team

Greater strategic planning / succession planning

Greater collaboration with staff

A number of SSOs related to a very specific project or organisational plan. Therefore, the sustainability of these SSOs was rather limited. That said, respondents identified a series of ways in which learning could be sustained. For example one SSO was related to a specific project within a Trust. Although the respondent only worked on that project for a couple of months following Summer School, they had still made significant advances before handing over the project in what they described as *“a more structured and focused”* manner. Adopting the tools and skills for one project, enabled the individual to grow, and become a more confident and logical manager. This person also noted that as a result, a number of smaller projects were now cascading through the organisation.

Respondents feel that the sustainability of the learning, in more general terms, is threatened by a lack of reflection time. Many delegates noted they had not had time to reflect on their learning since returning to work. Some argued that the day-to-day ‘stuff’ takes over and there is a risk that the learning from Summer School is wasted. Some felt that it was easier to discuss their learning, and the impact of Summer School in the baseline interviews rather than by the time it came round to the review: *“[I] felt more like a champion last time round...it is fading”*.

One participant, when asked, suggested the responsibility of reflection lies with employers as it is they who will gain from the reflection and effective use of learning from the Summer School. One participant suggested a useful way to ensure that participants reflect on their learning and disseminate this:

*“as long as I keep good records of what I have done there...and keep reflecting on them...I will keep using them throughout my career”*

*“A learning journal would be a good way of disseminating the learning”*

On a positive note however, some participants were able to note particular tools and skills which they were still using. Participants were asked which ones they were using on a weekly basis. Results included meditation, solution focused problem solving and wicked problems. Others referred to the overarching principles, or an ethos, which they were adopting on a regular basis, rather than any specific tools or techniques.

One way that delegates were able to reflect on their learning was to pass it on to others. In the baseline interviews, respondents were asked if they were planning to disseminate their learning. Most were planning to disseminate their learning informally to colleagues. Some discussed the possibility of holding workshops within their organisation, and others planned to disseminate learning beyond their organisation. There does not, however, appear to be any formal requirements to do so. The numbers below represent respondents who have, or plan to, disseminate their learning, or an aspect of their learning from Summer School:

- Within their team/with managers and colleagues = 9
- Within their organisation = 8
- Outside of their organisation = 8

## Dissemination of Learning | Case Studies

One attendee has completed a learning journal, which outlines the tools and resources from Summer School. They have passed onto colleagues, who have found it very useful

One participant has produced a summative paper on the Summer School course for the staff bulletin, which they hope will also be disseminated to key stakeholders

### 2.5 Return on Investment

Respondents found it difficult to comment on the return on investment in terms of the impact of Summer School on citizens. Both interviewees and those managers and colleagues completing the survey tended to provide general answers such as 'better management and leadership' and 'a more effective service' as the return on investment:

*"good people skills would extend to staff and to the public"*

*"service level maintained despite reducing staffing levels"*

A couple of people gave more specific examples. One suggested that patients would receive "quicker, more efficient services" if the patient flow within a hospital was improved. Another suggested that if a hospital service was restructured effectively, patients could receive better bedside care and attention from ward staff. Answers given were often the anticipated impact on citizens, but there had been no formal measurements of the actual impact.



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### 3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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We should be careful in generalising the findings from this relatively small sample to the whole Summer School cohort, but if the findings are applicable, it appears that nearly all delegates found the experience of attending Summer School a positive one, and came away refreshed, re-skilled and better able to face the challenges of leading in turbulent times. The delegates interviewed reported that 91% of the learning derived from Summer School was either directly relevant to their role now or would be in the coming few years, and nearly 90% of managers and colleagues would recommend Summer School to others on the basis of changes seen in those who had attended. It is clear therefore that PSMW's Summer School is having a substantial impact on managers both in terms of their formal skills development, and for their organisations through delivering transferrable learning and improving managerial performance.

What follows therefore should be seen in this positive context – the recommendations made here all focus on optimising the impact of Summer School across the five levels of outcomes. We make five such recommendations.

There was considerable variation in how delegates were selected across their organisations to attend Summer School in 2009. This situation needs to change and is being addressed. However, it is important to understand the value placed on an opportunity to attend Summer School – this value was clearly respected by respondents and it is something to protect. Further, whilst PSMW would not wish to discourage people from applying, there may be some merit in considering some specific entry criteria as part of a vigorous selection process to guarantee that those most receptive to the learning at Summer School are in attendance. This is of crucial importance – a simple test would be to ask whether all parties (delegates and sponsoring organisations) are clear about the purpose and aim of Summer School. If there is any confusion, more work will be needed in order to clarify it's purpose.

**Recommendation 1** *For future Summer Schools PSMW's recruitment processes should be routinely monitored to ensure appropriate delegates are in attendance, to optimise the residential programme and the impact of that delegates have back in their organisations.*

A small number of delegates pointed to difficulties in making networking function effectively for them. In many ways this is a product of personality and opportunity, but if people are not able to maximise the benefits from effective networking then alternatives before, during and after Summer School should be considered. One issue related to how much individual delegates had in common with each other, and how difficult it is to find out who has similar challenges and interests. As such a 'match.com'-type solution could be considered, asking delegates to submit a *pro forma* about themselves ahead of the event in order to facilitate a dialogue between individuals. A second issue related to how best to stay in touch after Summer School. This could be resolved by hosting a 'Facebook'-style group both during and after Summer School, using the benefits of social networking for professional purposes.

**Recommendation 2** *Actively consider using web-based technologies to remove barriers around networking, enabling dialogue between delegates during Summer School and sustaining the network as a dynamic online alumnus after Summer School finishes.*

There are reported problems in understanding the purpose and remit of the SSO. In part these can be attributed to the relative 'newness' of the approach in 2009. Coupled with this are issues around proving the outcomes of the SSO – how is it possible to show return on investment? This is a further challenge given the split of opinion about the SSO amongst the respondents – some felt that it narrowed their learning by forcing them to be too specific too early in the programme. Clearly there are certain advantages in an external evaluation such as this which is able to determine benefits across the five levels but this is not a sustainable long-term solution. Return on investment can of course be assessed, but this will require a longitudinal data collection relationship between PSMW and the organisations. It may not be desirable to consider such a relationship with *all* delegates but a stratified sample could be considered in order to provide PSMW with a representative dataset. It is important to remember at this point how significant it is to be able to quantify the potential positive impact on citizens, and how much of the learning is sustained by individuals and organisations. This echoes the discussion above about the balance between personal and organisational development.

**Recommendation 3** *Make decisions about how important an outcome-focused approach is to Summer School and by extension how central is return on investment data. If this is deemed sufficiently significant, appropriate questions about the costs and benefits of outcomes need to be incorporated in recruitment questionnaires against which data can be collected and analysed. Implicit in all of this are questions about the nature of the relationship between PSMW and the buy-in and tie-in of sponsoring organisations.*

Delegates were enthused by lots of the sessions they attended at Summer School. The nature of the programme meant that these could only ever be 'tasters', but it is clear that there is considerable desire to further the skills and techniques learned.

**Recommendation 4** *Consider using a range of techniques (including the 'Facebook' solution) to signpost delegates to local opportunities for developing their skills so that the learning commenced at Summer School can be optimised and sustained.*

In order to pass on learning to others, Summer School delegates have a responsibility to disseminate the skills, tools, techniques and approaches that they have gleaned from the programme. There are practical difficulties to achieving this when confronted with day-to-day pressures on their return to work. Providing pragmatic solutions to this problem would help to remove the barrier and allow opportunities to reflect on learning within the workplace, in a valuable way, following the Summer School. This would also maintain the accountability between delegates and their organisations – especially if the right colleagues and managers (including senior managers) are including in the process.

**Recommendation 5** *Using evidence of good practice from previous delegates, circulate models whereby learning can be disseminated effectively and efficiently in order to spread the learning as widely and as sustainably as possible.*

## APPENDIX I | Methodological approach and principal outcomes

	<b>LEVEL 1: Participant Impact</b>	<b>LEVEL 2: Delivery of outcome, impact on citizen</b>	<b>LEVEL 3: Organisational effectiveness</b>	<b>LEVEL 4: Sustainability and spread of changes delivered</b>	<b>LEVEL 5: Return on investment</b>
<b>1. Participants</b> <i>20 in-depth interviews undertaken immediately after Summer School (baseline) and three months thereafter (review)</i>	<p>Primary research to derive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Evidence of behavioural change</li> <li>○ Views of participants on future programme development</li> </ul>	<p>Primary research to derive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Perception of success of outcome</li> <li>○ Evaluation of specific learning including expected and unexpected consequences</li> </ul>		<p>Primary research to derive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sustainability of outcome: Operational, political, technical, cultural acceptance within organisation</li> <li>○ Spread of outcome: Learning and sharing across similar organisations</li> </ul>	<p>Primary research to derive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Better use of resources</li> <li>○ Actual value of delivery (if possible)</li> <li>○ Cultural values, and role of the organisation</li> <li>○ Outcome for citizens</li> </ul>
<b>2. Sponsors</b> <i>Returns from online questionnaires</i>		<p>Primary research to derive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Evidence of success through measurable targets, service outcomes and/or behavioural change</li> </ul>	<p>Primary research to derive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Perception of success in developing effective behaviours and ascertaining the impact of the outcome</li> <li>○ Before and after analysis of participant, and wider impact of outcome on organisation</li> </ul>		

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## APPENDIX II | Delegate interview indicative questions

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### BASELINE

#### A. Getting to Summer School

1. How did your organisation engage with you about the Summer School?
2. To what extent were you selected to attend ahead of others in your organisation?

#### B. Learning at Summer School

1. How would you describe the benefits of networks and having met people across organisations?
2. What new learning did you derive in relation to delivering your outcome? [How effective was it?]
3. What new learning did you derive in relation to delivering your personal development? [How effective was it?]
4. What percentage of your learning from Summer School fits into each of these categories?
  - Directly relevant to my current role
  - Likely to be relevant to the development of my role in the next 2-3 years
  - No direct relevance to my current role

#### C. Changes in the workplace

1. In what ways will you implement new skills learned identified?
2. What are you doing differently, at work, as a result of having completed the Summer School?
3. What do you think your manager would say that you are doing differently?
4. What have your colleagues said about changes in the way that you work?
5. How do you propose that findings from your outcome be disseminated?

#### D. Overall

1. What do you feel is the balance between organisational and personal development at Summer School? [What should it be?]
2. What do you consider to be the likely impacts on citizens of your attendance?
3. Would you recommend the Summer School to colleagues? [Why | why not?]
4. To what extent have you become a champion for Summer School? [Why | why not?]

### REVIEW

#### A. Changes in the workplace

1. What are you now doing differently, at work, as a result of having completed the Summer School?
2. What do you think your manager would say that you are doing differently?

3. What have your colleagues said about changes in the way that you work?
4. Of the learning you felt was directly relevant to your role, how much of it would you say you...
  - were using on a weekly basis (if so how?)
  - were using less frequently than weekly
  - found useful but have not used it in the last 3 months

**B. Overall**

1. How have you and/or your organisation benefited from Summer School? Give 3 Examples.
2. What do you consider to be the likely impacts on citizens of your attendance?
3. Would you [still] recommend the Summer School to colleagues? [Why | why not?]
4. To what extent have you become a champion for Summer School? [Why | why not?]

### BASELINE

#### A. Getting to Summer School

1. Why did you consider (insert name) to be a suitable participant in the programme?
2. What features of the Summer School do you believe made it suitable?
3. What were you hoping to gain by sending them on the programme?
4. How was the outcome element of the Summer School identified?

#### B. Changes in the workplace

1. In what ways will they implement new skills learned identified?
2. What different behaviours have you been able to identify in the workplace since the participant completed the Summer School?
3. What do you think they would say that you they doing differently?

#### C. Overall

1. What do you feel is the balance between organisational and personal development at Summer School? [What should it be?]
2. How successful would you consider the outcome to have been for the organisation, and for the participant?
3. What do you consider to be the likely impacts on citizens of their attendance?
4. Would you recommend the Summer School to colleagues?

### REVIEW

#### A. Changes in the workplace

1. What different behaviours have you been able to identify in the workplace since the participant completed the Summer School?
2. What do you think they would say they are doing differently?

#### B. Overall

1. How successful would you consider the outcome to have been for the organisation, and for the participant?
2. How have your colleague and/or your organisation benefited from Summer School? Give 3 examples.
3. What do you consider to be the likely impacts on citizens of their attendance?
4. Would you recommend the Summer School to colleagues?

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