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NEVER MIND THE BILLIONS...NHS MANAGERS HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE WHAT TO DO

NEW BOOK LIFTS THE LID ON THE SCANDAL OF THE CONTROL FREAK MANAGERS WHO LEAVE MILLIONS UNSPENT, PATIENTS WAITING ON TROLLEYS AND DOCTORS AND NURSES DEMORALISED

A NEW book predicts that much of New Labour's promised new billions of pounds of taxpayers' money for the NHS will be wasted unless a generation of 'control freak' and 'megalomaniac' managers change their ways.

The book '*Managing Public Services – Implementing Changes – A Thoughtful Approach to Management*' reveals how performance indicators are rigged to prove that standards are improving.

Even though patients know they are waiting longer and longer for treatment, statistics can 'prove' them liars.

Similar management sleight of hand blights other public services, including the teaching profession, the railways and the police force, claims Terry Horne, a researcher and academic at the Lancashire Business School of the University of Central Lancashire who co-wrote the book with fellow academic Tony Doherty

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from St Martin's College, Lancaster.

“Without changes in the practice of management, much of the extra spending promised for the NHS will be a waste of public money,” he claimed.

“We found millions unspent by health managers because they are not trained how to manage large scale improvement projects.

“In the last 12 months, an eight percent increase in spending was associated with a decrease in the numbers of patients treated. A ten per cent increase in the number of doctors in Accident & Emergency has been associated with an increase in the number of casualties who had to wait more than an hour. Hardly the improvement in the health service which Tony Blair promised to deliver.”

Horne and Doherty, who took five years to research and write the book, blamed a generation of ‘control freak’ and ‘megalomaniac’ senior managers for failing to improve public services.

Terry Horne said senior managers often wrongly use old-fashioned faddish management techniques - long ago abandoned by the private sector - to meet bogus ‘performance’ targets and to keep their own jobs secure.

“Waiting lists are often reduced simply by not putting patients on those lists until they are about to be treated,” he said.

“So the reduced lists ‘prove’ things are getting better but the reality is just the opposite.”

Mr Horne claimed the NHS could start improving services by training managers how to adapt their practice of management to the special needs of the public services.

“When we went into an organisation and changed the management practice - by encouraging managers to talk to their staff and adopt a more thoughtful and conversational approach - services started to improve.

“Public service managers need a different practice of management from those who manage factories. We are not arguing that we should not spend more money on the NHS but that money alone is not going to work. The politicians know the NHS is not working, the public know it is not working.

“More than 70 per cent of the resources in the NHS are people. If the managers in charge would manage their people as individuals instead of in groups, it would work much better. It is not rocket science. It just needs a shift from theoretical management to practical management. Managers who practice a more conversational approach are more economical, more efficient, more effective and, importantly, more ethical - important given current concerns about sleaze, spin and corruption.”

The authors claims that colleges and universities can lead the way by re-training public services managers to adopt more appropriate management techniques and that if this happened the situation in the NHS would improve very quickly.

Ends

Notes to editors:

- **Terry Horne and Tony Doherty are available for interview. Please contact Alan Air on Tel: 07974 765870 for further information.**
- **Terry Horne led Masters programmes in Strategic Change and leads the MBA Change Management pathway at Lancashire Business School, University of Central Lancashire. He is co-author with Simon Wootton of 'Strategic Thinking' and 'Thinking Skills for Managers.'**
- **Tony Doherty is Director of St Martin's College Business and Community Enterprise Unit.**
- **Managing Public Services – Implementing Changes – A Thoughtful Approach to the Practice of Management is published by Routledge, price £24.99.**

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