

the transition easier. Attention switches to managing the Trust Board and the managers.

ERA 4:

April 91 - date: Trust in place coming to terms with sustaining momentum - focus on internal cultural change and key strategic issues.

From September 1989 until the end of June 1992 the group of Executives has comprised the same people who came together to form the core of the Trust project group.

3. Identifying The Culture of UBHT

Cultural analysis or diagnosis can involve a number of approaches and activities, some formal, others informal. My methods have included in depth interviews with all members of the group and lengthy periods of 'participant observation'. The latter includes attendance at meetings, chats, phone calls, wandering around the buildings, going on tours, awaydays etc There are also some specific things that researchers can choose to focus on to give insight into cultural attributes: stories, rites, rituals, ceremonies, symbols, dress codes, use of space, chronology and time, leadership, group behaviour, beliefs, values, history, language, published documents. There is far too much in this list to go into detail about everything at this point. Much of the material on values has already been discussed and covered in the awayday sessions. What I want to do here is simply add some small insights and also draw attention to areas where I am confused. The organisation moves very quickly and as I am not a permanent fixture I find it very difficult to keep up.

The organisation is action oriented, a place where 'doing' things is important. Achievement and credibility can rest upon what is done, rather than what is said or written down. Output is an important means of understanding performance and runs counter to many process oriented organisations. It is also an oral culture, this enables people to act at speed and also provide a flexible interpretation of what should or did happen. There is a dislike of certainty and the prescription. Both of these are interpreted as the 'closing down' of executive options. The organisation likes to have freedom to manoeuvre and redefine 'reality' to create the best options for action. The advantages of this approach are balanced by some disadvantages one aptly identified as "whilst the group has leadership, it often lacks organisation". Also people at levels below the EDs often have difficulty remembering and interpreting what is said when things are not written down on paper. Paper and the written word are often described as 'necessary evils', 'tools of bureaucracy', something that 'other people do for me', taking a lot of time for very little benefit. 'Administrator' is used almost as a term of abuse, suggesting someone who is narrow and rigid in their understanding and intellectually inferior. Administrators relate to the 'old style' NHS and are happy in closets 'processing meaningless work'.

The organisation sees itself as 'constantly changing', a 'white water' organisation, or one that is in constant turbulence that will not settle down. Consequently, there has been an active attempt to impress upon people that 'flexibility and change' are prerequisites for survival in UBHT in future to prevent staff seeking a 'comfort zone' of momentary stability.

UBHT has an ambivalent relationship with the external environment. The need