

University of Wales Trinity Saint David's

Assignment Title: Leadership Theories in Action

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Organisational leadership - theory into practice
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The event that will be critically analysed and looked at is the Manchester Arena Bombing attack that happened on May 22nd 2017. There will be an evaluation of the effectiveness that was carried out by the public services but mainly the North West Ambulance service. The areas that will be looked at is what type of leadership skills were used by the NWAS and if the skills were used to a good standard or if their skills put them in a more critical situation. After discussing what the leadership styles were during the event, they will then be evaluated and consider what the NWAS team could have done better.

During the Manchester bombing attack there were a few different types of leadership that had been carried out by members of the North West Ambulance Service. One of them being transformational. Transformational leadership is an approach that causes change in individuals and society. Through a variety of techniques used in a team, transformational leadership improves the motivation, morale, and performance of its followers.

When having to work with their teams to create a successful approach, transformational leaders rely on communication, passion, adaptability, and support. Transformational leaders may express a sense of direction and purpose that motivates team members to go above and beyond (Bass et.al. 2006).

This is exactly what Parry Ennis had carried out during the attack. Paddy Ennis was first at the scene, modelled the way in the foyer, coming up with the idea that they should use billboards and metal railings as equipment in which he inspired others with his vision (Kerslake 2018).

Another example of transformational leadership was carried out by Derek Poland, commander of NWAS. BBC News (2021) says that Derek Poland arrived at the scene expecting to have a higher commanding role because of his skills. However

when he arrived, he was the parking point officer. He had to lead the ambulances where to park and then brief everyone that came about the current situation. This is good transformational leadership because Derek got himself involved with the teamwork that was being carried out instead of giving the commands to other people on his team. The advantages that came with David getting involved with his team helped increase team motivation and job satisfaction.

A participative leadership style helps in the creation of a strong team.

High level of productivity can be achieved by all working together instead of just giving out the commands. The effectiveness that Derek had on the situation created an impact on his team to be motivated and strong minded. This allowed the paramedics arriving at the scene to go into the foyer where there were multiple casualties with confidence.

A negative impact that the NWAS had was their Gold commander Neil Barnes who was at home for two hours after the explosion had happened. He said that he was waiting for more intel before heading to the scene. His type of leadership shown that night is known as "laissez-faire leadership". A laissez - faire leadership style depends on members of the team taking initiative. If team members are skilled, take responsibility, and want to work alone, this can be an effective technique. However, in the case of the Manchester Arena attack, the NWAS team could not work alone. The disadvantages of this leadership style is that it can cause more issues with teamwork. If there is no sense of leadership or communication then roles and responsibilities will soon crumble under pressure (Chaudhry et.al. 2012).

Mr Barnes shows that he is a Laissez-faire leader. This type of leadership can result in poor crisis management, to which it did during the bombing. Mr Barnes' trusted his workers to know what to do, and mostly just left them to get on with the task at hand.

Relying exclusively on this very relaxed, hands-off leadership style may make you appear like you do not care and are disengaged with the rest of the team, potentially creating higher risks.

The effectiveness that Neil Barnes had created in this situation just added more stress onto the NWAS. Neil had discussed in an interview that he did not call the emergency operations centre of NWAS or use his radio to listen in on radio traffic to find out what was going on.

Mr Barnes said: "I think the process is clear. I don't get involved as a strategic commander."

Mr Barnes had added more stress to the event and other commanders in NWAS as they then had to step up to his gold commander role until he arrived at the scene. He had slowed things down for the NWAS. If Neil Barnes arrived at the scene the same time as everyone else, roles and tasks may have been carried out quicker as people would have had an idea of what they had from Barnes instead of walking into something they did not know much about.

Recommendations can be made about the Manchester Arena attack on what could have been done better and how all agencies can work better as a team in case something like the attack is to happen again.

A recommendation for the NWAS is that all paramedics whether they are fully trained or at a novice level, should be briefed and trained to high excellence on situations involving terrorist attacks. This will allow the NWAS to be more prepared when having to step foot into a situation that is unexpected.

One recommendation is that all major transport vehicles and public venues as well as all public services should provide straight access to basic frameless canvas stretchers to enable rapid movement

and evacuation of casualties during terrorist attacks or other high-threat situations. This will then ensure that services will have enough equipment for casualties. If the police and the fire service could have provided with stretches then it would not have slowed down the NWS having to improvise on what to carry out people on. During such events as the Arena attack, radio signals and calls to the command support room can be overwhelmed by both internal and external calls. Due to the construction of phone signals being poor or non-existent, this can cause an issue if the public services teams need to contact each other but cannot get through. A recommendation could be by using a WiFi-based communication system such as WhatsApp for both instant messaging and voice contact. To make it easier for the services to contact each other. This way there would have been less complication between the three public services and the fire service would have arrived sooner and the NWS would have known that there was an operation 'PLATO' going forward. This could have then allowed more lives to be saved and could have resulted in people being treated and taken to hospital quicker (Manchester Arena Inquiry, 2021).

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