

# INNOVATION - B1

THE ICS NETWORKING GROUP

GLOUCESTERSHIRE INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM

SOUTH WEST, SYSTEM WIDE

With special thanks to this team of innovators for taking part in the pilot of this programme and contributing to its development.



FOR INFORMATION ON THE  
INNOVATION PROGRAMME  
[CLICK HERE](#)

## THE INNOVATORS

The ICS networking group in Gloucestershire comprises of 12 to 15 finance / BI staff, all with a common interest in promoting networking across the System. The group meets monthly and has established a wide-ranging programme of events for the coming months as well as helping to establish working groups in each partner organisation. The levels of engagement across the System has been incredible and the finance directors allow the group to send a representative to their monthly meeting to ensure we are fully supported at a senior level. We are so proud of what we have achieved to date and can only see this approach going from strength to strength.

### THE PROBLEM

The Finance and BI teams from across the Gloucestershire System **needed to** improve networking and establish areas of common ground **because** not addressing this problem would result in teams continuing to work in organisations silo's. As a System we are stronger together.

### THE CHALLENGES

1. **How can we** establish common ground **so that** we can build bridges between teams and become more effective as a System?
2. **How do we** identify what the teams require **so that** we can build on the momentum and enthusiasm?
3. **How do we** establish core / discretionary areas of common ground **so that** we share approaches, techniques and learning and become more effective as a System?

## THE INNOVATION

### Background

In 2019 the Directors of Finance from across the Gloucestershire System proposed a Systemwide networking event for Finance and BI staff. The event was organised by a team of us with support from the DoF's and was held at the Cheltenham Racecourse in October 2019. The event was hugely successful and the feedback and the desire to improve networking exceeded all of our expectations. We were supported in running this event by speakers from Future-Focused Finance, HFMA Finance Team of the Year from Leeds Teaching Hospital as well as local speakers (DoF's, Chief Executives etc).

### So What

Given the momentum generated we established a small group of willing volunteers from across the

System to help pull together future events. We had plans for quarterly sessions but then the Covid-19 pandemic hit. We were faced with either losing the momentum or find an alternative to keep this going.

We decided that to put the brakes on was not an option and we had to find a way of continuing. The working group continued to meet virtually and we were given monthly access to the Systems Resource Steering Group (where the DoF's and other senior finance staff met). The working group had all sorts of ideas and with unwavering support from the DoF's we were empowered to run with this.

### **What have we achieved so far**

To build bridges we needed to understand more about each organisation. Their objectives, how their Finance and BI teams were structured, their proud moments, etc. We started with a series of get to know each other presentations. Each organisation took turns presenting with Q&A sessions at the end. We ran 5 of these sessions during 2020/21. The events were well attended with well over 100 staff attending each session.

We also sent out a questionnaire to all Finance and BI staff to find out how they would like to take this forward. Suggestions for future events, frequency of events, requests for speakers, areas of common ground, etc. This exercise was well supported and hugely informative as we begin to structure future sessions.

We ran 'randomised coffee trials' for staff across the System to spend a few minutes with a colleague from elsewhere in the System. The feedback from these events has been excellent. many staff have found these 1 to 1's particularly beneficial.

We have started to find areas of common ground. We've identified core groups, many of which exist already but we're seeking for these groups to share best practice and to learn from each other. Core groups will be training non-finance staff, staff wellbeing H3 (here, happy and healthy), FFF development and personal and professional development. We aim for each of these groups to exist within all System organisations with a couple of members of each group meeting regularly to share best practice. There are also a number of discretionary groups that will be encouraged. This would include Communications & Socials, Systems & Processes and Finance Strategy. These groups will be encouraged and as they mature in all organisations they will become core groups.

We have started to produce a System wide Finance and BI newsletter to share progress and encourage involvement.

### **The Working Group**

The working group behind this innovations consists of around 12 members of staff. This group does not consist of just senior staff and is intentionally made up of a wide cross section of the teams. We meet

monthly on the last Friday of each month and have done so throughout the pandemic. The group is empowered to set direction and help address the requirements coming from our staff survey. We have regular access to the DoF's so that they can help us to overcome obstacles, provide support and ensure we're on the right track. The System DoF's have been hugely supportive in allowing us to continue with this innovation.

## THE LESSONS LEARNT

- There's not much we wouldn't do again. We've been hugely fortunate that the pandemic didn't stop this innovation and that the DoF's have been supportive throughout. Main lesson for me is be brave! If we want someone like Elizabeth O'Mahony, Kaye Bentley or Julian Kelly to speak to our group we should ask!
- We learned to get to know each other by better and regular System wide networking.

## THE OUTPUTS

6 x System wide networking events to date with in excess of 100 attendees per event; monthly steering group sessions; System wide staff survey with actions; randomised coffee trials; establishing core groups for areas of common interest going forward


## THE OUTCOMES

Improved networking, sharing best practice, getting to know each other and establishing opportunities for closer working in the future


## THE QUICK WINS

Set up a working group and get dates in the diary, seek support from senior colleagues, establish areas of common ground

## THE REVIEWERS SAID



GREAT WORK BY ALL THOSE INVOLVED AND OBVIOUSLY HUGE AMOUNTS OF ENERGY, EFFORT AND TIME PUT INTO THIS. GREAT TO SEE THIS CONTINUE THROUGH THE PANDEMIC WHEN REALISTICALLY NETWORKING WAS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT WITH HOME WORKING HAPPENING.



I LIKED THE “RANDOMISED COFFEE TRIALS”, I MIGHT PINCH THIS WITH PRIDE!



THROUGH STARTING ON THE “GETTING TO KNOW” EACH OTHER WITHIN AND ACROSS THE SYSTEM THIS IS LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS GOING FORWARD.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

**If you recognise the problem stated and have implemented your own innovation** to overcome it please submit this innovation to the programme and give others more examples to learn from.

**SUBMIT INNOVATION**

**If you recognise the problem stated and would like to know more details about this innovation in particular**, we will be hosting showcase and workshop sessions throughout the year, so all interested staff can gain ideas and inspiration from innovators in a manageable one-to-many format.

**REGISTER INTEREST**

**If you have a problem but don't currently know of a solution to it**, then please submit it here and in 2022 the Forum intends to crowdsource solutions to problems that don't currently have known innovations.

**SUBMIT PROBLEM**

**If you would like to learn more about about the innovation programme** please click below for more details

**LEARN MORE**

## IN SEPTEMBER 2021 THE FORUM LAUNCHED...

- A national Innovation Programme for NHS Finance staff to submit their innovations for peer review. Successful innovations will be published and accessible to all on the One NHS Finance website
- A 'Software Skills For Finance Staff' event series taught by NHS Finance for NHS Finance including MS Excel, PowerBI, SQL etc.
- An 'Art of the Possible' briefing which explains two new technologies AI & Blockchain and discusses the opportunity for NHS Finance
- An Automation Group to review and improve the efficiency of existing national processes and returns

## WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

- Submit your innovations for peer review
- Sign up to be an innovation peer reviewer
- Read Art of the Possible
- Sign up for Software Skills for Finance
- Register your interest in automation and all things innovative

### Innovation Programme



### Software Skills



### Automation sign up



### Be a peer reviewer



### Art of the Possible



### FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: [FinanceInnovation.nhs.uk](https://financeinnovation.nhs.uk)

Email: [finance.innovation@nhs.net](mailto:finance.innovation@nhs.net)

LinkedIn: [One NHS Finance](#)

Twitter: [@OneNHSFinance](#)

### ENDORSEMENT DISCLAIMER

The Finance Innovation Forum's Innovation Programme asks NHS Finance peer reviewers whether the "Innovation overcomes, successfully addresses, or solves the problem identified". The programme does not endorse, recommend or provide any assurance of software used or mentioned in any of the published innovations. If you think a published innovation is being used to falsely validate a commercial product or company please contact [finance.innovation@nhs.net](mailto:finance.innovation@nhs.net)



One NHS Finance brings together the Future-Focused Finance, National Finance Academy, and the Finance Innovation Forum programmes and networks to make sure that everyone working in NHS Finance has access to skills, knowledge, methods, and opportunities to influence and enhance patient services.



Identifying and developing innovative ways of working and new areas of improvement.