

INNOVATION - T1

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INNOVATION PROGRAMME
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THE INNOVATOR

I have worked within NHS Finance now for approx. 20 years - starting as an apprentice at a Mental Health Trust in Oct 2001. Through the circa 20 years- I have worked across a number of roles, CDDPS (Until Dec 2008) and then at CDDFT where I continue to work now. I've been involved with the VM network since my application in March 2015 and look forward to all that ONE NHS Finance will bring.

THE PROBLEM

The Finance Community **needs to** develop a standard and streamlined costing tool, updated centrally and pushed to all organisations **because otherwise** there will be a huge duplication of effort within finance teams, the length and breadth of the country, each creating their own internal models after every update in pay scales or technical guidance. Developed centrally, this allows the opportunity for both consistency, simplification and the opportunity to develop and enhance, utilising our combined and considerable knowledge base.

THE CHALLENGE

How might we develop this automated costing tool **so that** it becomes a valuable and accurate resource, used cross organisationally by finance and non finance staff alike. I wanted this to be a tool that could be used by finance staff (To improve efficiency and consistency of output) but also to make this sufficiently intuitive that non finance staff understood and could use the model- the intention being the time saved could be reinvested into other value adding work areas.

THE INNOVATION

Upon conceiving the idea, I immediately reached out to my network contacts (including the Value Make Facebook Group) and requested a copy of current costing models to assess variation and variability across the NHS with the intention being to replicate the "Must Have" features and to ensure the development proposed as a minimum matched current models.

Following receipt of several different models, which interesting all yielded slightly different results (further highlighting the need for a central model), I commenced creating and developing the integrated and automated costing model as an outline draft / proof of concept.

Once this initial draft was completed- I redistributed this back to the colleagues which supported my initial ask for peer review and initial observations and quickly followed up with further engagement with both local and national contacts which I had developed through the various networks (Future-Focused Finance, Value Maker Network being one) to seek further review, observation and suggestions. Following its successful launch, I held a Best Practice Market Stall event via FFF in October 2020 and was invited to discuss the model once more at the East Of England VM conference in February 2021. This offered a great opportunity to both promote the model and to obtain further feedback and ideas which could be integrated into future updates. Since it's initial launch, we are now on version 1.04 which brings the model

up to date with the latest Medical and Agenda for Change Pay Scales with a number of other organic improvements also incorporated.

THE LESSONS LEARNT

- I wouldn't overpromise and under-deliver with regard to timescales again because this may make users / contributors feel that their suggestions have not been valuable (100% not the case) and lose confidence with the development. Perhaps a little harsh on myself due to available time and the COVID Pandemic taking over everyone's work (Personal and Work) but for the next update (v1.05)- I am going to make visible all proposed developments along with a realistic timescale for publication.
- I learned further Microsoft Excel Visual Basic coding through pure need to resolve some initial issues I had encountered in realising the model. For this- Google was my friend!

THE OUTPUTS

The tangible product which came from the innovation is a published Automated Costing Model available via the Value Maker Network. Alternatively, this is available via <https://www.facebook.com/groups/valuemaker>

THE OUTCOMES

The Costing Model continues to be a valuable tool across the NHS- whereby organisations are aware of its existence. Despite being relative quiet over the last 12 months due to COVID related work pressures- it is encouraging the number of emails / chat messages received asking if an updated version is available or when the next planned update will be. Benefits arising from the development are;

- Time Savings
- Consistency / Accuracy
- A Single National Model (Developed and continuing to be adopted)

THE QUICK WINS

- My advice would be - jot / scribble down your idea to start putting onto paper (or screen) what the ideas is and brainstorm ideas.
- Ask the question and propose the idea to the Value Maker Community to help get the idea going and provide valuable advice and idea generation. Engagement with VM's via the Facebook Group worked great for me (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/valuemaker>) but regional networks or the MS Teams Forums set up centrally via FFF will equally be supportive. VM's are a great and create bunch and the collective knowhow across our growing network is astounding and I would go with the old adage, a problem shared is a problem solved.
- Develop the proposal - it doesn't have to be perfect straight away. Too often ideas are locked away until they are deemed perfect - publish early and develop together.

THE REVIEWERS SAID

THE MODEL ITSELF IS EASY TO USE AND GIVES A VERY GOOD AND QUICK ESTIMATE FOR AD HOC STAFF COSTING NEEDS. THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO COVER THE DIFFERENT PAY STRUCTURES FOR MEDICAL STAFF ARE THOROUGH AND ACCURATELY REPRESENT THE ELEMENTS THAT SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTE TO STAFF COSTS. THE JOB OF UPDATING PAYSCALES IS ONE REPEATED ACROSS THE ENTIRE NHS SO TRUSTING ONE SOURCE TO GET IT RIGHT SO THE JOB ISN'T DUPLICATED IS A SUCCESS OF ITS OWN.

THE COSTING MODEL IS A FANTASTIC EXAMPLE OF PROVIDING A QUICK CALCULATOR FOR AD HOC STAFF COSTS AND SHOULD BE THE GO-TO CALCULATOR FOR THE NHS.

THE COSTING MODEL ITSELF IS HIGHLY COMPREHENSIVE AND IS FLEXIBLE ENOUGH FOR DIFFERENT SCENARIOS. ALLOWS FOR MULTIPLE POSTS TO BE COSTED AT THE SAME TIME.

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

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



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.